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SIX CANADIAN PLAYS

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By Arthur Lismer

September Gale

This canvas, striking in its movement and power, epitomizes the spirit of the Georgian Bay country in storm mood. Here are the stunted and wind-blown pines, the shoals and islands, the open stretches of sky and water of the first play in this volume, "The Bone Spoon".

SIX CANADIAN PLAYS

EDITED BY
HERMAN A. VOADEN

with drawings by
LOWRIE WARRENER

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There is no restriction upon the reading of the plays by schools or study groups. The authors wish to encourage an interest in Canadian Drama. The small royalty is intended only to ensure production by reputable groups.

This is *our* homeland, and some of us can see it so with *our* eyes and not with the eyes we brought across the Atlantic, still hazy with Scottish mists and rose-tinted by English blossoms.

How shall the artist fare when the audience sees its country and its country's art through an old glamour—the product of centuries of blood, and flags, and creeping ivy, and the bells of churches in the fields—a glamour which is not here! Our own glamour is what the artist here is trying to show us, but at present we cannot see it.

When we can forget the old countries—when we really awake and *see* this country as ours instead of merely calling it ours—when we no longer regard ourselves as exiles and everybody else as foreigners—then, perhaps, we shall be able to sing the Lord's song in a strange land, "because it will be no longer strange".

* * * *

There is a spirit here, a response to the new, the natural, the open, the massive—as contrasted with the old, artificial, enclosed littlenesses of Europe—that should eventually, when we rely on it less timidly, become actively creative. And this creativeness, recognized as our own, and proceeding from the awakened consciousness of a new people with a new future, will itself become a quickening power, jogging laggards out of their doze . . . or counteracting the narcotic effects of scepticism, so that religion—and hence art—becomes vital and fresh; an hourly response to life's exultations!

BERTRAM BROOKER

(In *Yearbook of the Arts in Canada*)

PREFACE

IN THE eloquent passage quoted at the beginning of this book, Bertram Brooker points out that the Canadian artist (and by artist he means poet and dramatist, as well as painter) cannot gain adequate encouragement while his audience sees our country through a glamour which is not here; that when the new spirit which is in Canada—the "response to the new, the natural, the open, the massive—as contrasted with the old, artificial, enclosed littlenesses of Europe",—when this spirit is recognized as our own and relied on less timidly by both audience and artist it will become actively creative, and springing "from the awakened consciousness of a new people", will give us a religion and art that will be vital and fresh, "an hourly response to life's exultations".

This book is addressed to the Canadian audience and artist. In the field of drama, it attempts to strike the note of Canadianism which some of our painters have asserted with such courage in their own medium of expression. If, in reaching schools, study groups, little theatres, and the general reader, it arouses the interest of our audience in "the Canadian mood", and if it encourages playwrights and other artists to give themselves more whole-heartedly to the expression of our own land and people, it will have accomplished its major purpose.

The plays are for the most part "first flights". In a young country it is hardly to be expected that technical facility can be achieved immediately, particularly in the difficult technique of playwriting. The authors would be the last to claim that their efforts are free from faults. But there is a fine sincerity in the plays, close observation, wide variety and appeal, at times power and intensity. If Canada is to have a drama of her own, these "first flights" must be encouraged. They will not be attempted without the stimulus of production and publication.

PREFACE

The six plays in this volume were selected from forty-nine submitted in the contest conducted in 1929-30 by the Central High School of Commerce, Toronto. They include "Lake Doré", "God-Forsaken", "Winds of Life", and three others chosen by the editor. An exterior northern setting was required, and it was suggested that contestants follow in mood or subject matter the paintings of artists whose work they considered Canadian in character. The result is that the plays are infused with the vigorous, outdoor spirit of Canada. The volume bears a close relation to the achievements of our artists in painting the north country, and to the philosophy of Canadianism which justified their method and inspired their success. Hence it is more deliberately Canadian than the few collections of plays that have been published in this country up to the present time. As one author says, "The one thing I care about is registering the Canadian mood. If I have expressed that mood in this play or in anything else I've written, I'm satisfied".

The northern outdoor setting does more than confirm the note of Canadianism; it offers a unique opportunity to the producer—to attempt an artistic production in which a Canadian setting and atmosphere will permeate finely both action and character so that all three elements will be harmoniously fused in a higher synthesis. Whether presented simply or elaborately the plays must be staged creatively, for they represent a background new in the history of the theatre. They challenge the producer to call in the artist, and give the production an interest wider than that of action or the spoken word. Performed intelligently and with sincerity they should bring something of the larger and more vital spirit of Canada into our theatre and encourage us to proceed resolutely toward a drama that like our painting will be conscious of its own identity, vision, and opportunity.

The editor wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to the many individuals who have aided him both directly and indirectly in preparing this volume. Particularly is he indebted to F. B. Housser, whose book *The Group of*

*Seven, A Canadian Art Movement** first interested him in the achievements of our painters, and to Bertram Brooker, editor of *The Yearbook of the Arts in Canada.** Acknowledgment is also made to Eric Browne, curator of the National Gallery, Ottawa, and to Fred S. Haines, curator of the Art Gallery of Toronto; to Professor J. D. Robins, J. E. H. MacDonald, and Merrill Denison, who acted as judges in the competition; to Arthur Lismer and Dr. Lawrence Mason; to William Ward, Principal at the Central High School of Commerce, and G. K. D. Alderson; and to the six authors for their generous cooperation.

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INTRODUCTION

"Why should we grope among the dusty bones of the past? Why should not we also have an original relation to the universe?"—EMERSON.

THE purpose of the competition in which these plays were entered was to stimulate interest "in the creation of a Canadian Drama and Art of the Theatre". The editor has the same purpose in mind in the publication of this volume. The road to a National Drama and Theatre in Canada is not an easy one. The way is beset with pitfalls. Some think it not to be accomplished in a score of generations; others proclaim the journey fruitless, the goal an illusion. The few volumes of Canadian plays already published are Canadian in the sense and to the degree that the authors are Canadians and are writing about the locale in which they have lived. This is not enough. There must be dedication, a faith and idealism to give unity and purpose to creation. Nothing supremely great was ever created except in this spirit of dedication. And then in the same zealous and consecrated manner, there must be keen observation, sympathetic study, and patient "awareness" of a new environment. As Lawren Harris, in an article entitled "Creative Art and Canada", published in the *McGill News* and reprinted in Bertram Brooker's *Yearbook of the Arts in Canada** points out, "it needs the stimulus of earth resonance and of a particular place, people and time to evoke into activity a faculty that is universal and timeless".

These two things, dedication and absorption in a soil and people, distinguished the Irish Literary Renaissance,

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a movement which holds great interest and promise to us as we look forward toward our own future as a creative nation. Yeats digging deeply in the treasure-store of Celtic legends, Lady Gregory patient to catch the racy soil-flavour of peasant life, Synge wandering through the Aran Islands, far from the decadent life he had known in Paris, listening to the peculiar rhythms and intonations of the folk-speech that he used with such power and beauty—these were inspired by a common vision and an enthusiasm for a land and people with which they felt a spiritual "oneness".

Just as significant is the prophetic testimony of Walt Whitman, who though an American, has been the most definite inspiration in the movement of Canadianism up to this time. He breathes the confidence of a new land.

"Have the elder races halted?
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied,
over there beyond the seas?
We take up the task eternal and the burden, and
the lesson,
Pioneers, O pioneers!"

Moreover he justifies a new technique and approach —a largeness, boldness, and breadth of treatment commensurate with the vastness of the country.

"Ages, precedents, have long been accumulating
undirected materials,
America brings builders, and brings its own
styles."

When Whitman was twenty-nine years of age he left the thronging, bustling, crowds of New York, crossed the Alleghanies, and went down the Mississippi to New Orleans. He returned a year later by a route that took him into the heart of the Middle West, and north as far as Chicago and the Great Lakes.

This was his first glimpse of the vast interior of America. With what eagerness he gathered up impressions of

that immense and untamed land! How he thrilled to the discovery of its spaciousness! The challenge of wild borderlands helped to deepen the spiritual currents of his life, and he began the splendid interpretation of America in an unfettered medium of poetic expression. He saw himself as the prophet of East and West together, singing the united hopes and aspirations, the courage and strength, of a youthful people. And throughout life his song breathed the adventure the wilderness invoked. It predicted the limitless "eligibilities" of prairies, and echoed the sharp exultation of mountains, as truly as it answered the clamour of thriving, growing cities.

Canada today is like Whitman's America, awakening to a sense of unlimited power and wealth, proud in her youth, and needing only her confidence to succeed. As yet she has no Whitman to catch up the song of city answering plain and forest, to feel the mighty pulse of limitless lands. But many of us are beginning to experience as he did, the spell of the great unclaimed areas of rock and tree wilderness that border our civilization. We are aware of something vast, unsentimental, challenging, and spiritual in our land. The wilderness is becoming part of us. We are drawn out to meet it in spirit.

We are making the journey that Whitman made, discovering the essential unity of East and West, thrilling to the opulence of the country, its immensity, its sweeping variety of natural forms, its restlessness and wide-reaching aspirations. We are realizing that the farming sections of Lower Ontario and Quebec, the valleys of British Columbia, and the pastoral lands of the Maritimes—all rich and populated, and reminiscent to a degree of Old World landscape—in reality form only a small part of our total area and potential wealth; that in the great stretches of prairie, in the wilderness that reaches from Labrador to Northern Manitoba, in the mountains of the West and the barren lands of the North, lie the real extent and larger wealth of Canada. And in

this Greater Canada there is a fresh, vital, free spirit, as different from that of the settled portions of the world as was the spirit of the American West in Whitman's time.

This Greater Canada must have a place in our literature and art—its spirit must inform and give breadth to what we create. The older farming and industrial sections of the country should not be neglected. There should be a balance between old and new, between civilization and wilderness, between the contained and the unlimited. But not until, like Whitman, we throb with the eagerness of a new discovery, not until the pulse of our spiritual life beats greatly with the immensity and strangeness of wide margins, not until we turn our backs on what is reminiscent of other lands and accept our own, instinct with this new spirit—not until then shall we create greatly.

This volume is dedicated to the north, "a rough country of rivers, waterfalls, lakes, canyons, and great hills", which F. B. Housser describes vividly: "The principal means of travelling when one leaves the railroad is by canoe and portage. The land has a peculiar magnetism. Once its air has filled your lungs and its spaciousness entered you, it calls you back. At night the stars look larger than elsewhere. In the daytime the sun is brighter. In autumn the colour is more vivid. In winter the snow is whiter. It is a dramatic land, sometimes stern, sometimes friendly. It lures you to learn what lies around the next bend of the river, over the ragged outline of a hill of spruce, or on the other end of a portage."* To this land our painters turned twenty years ago, and, making Walt Whitman's discovery, thrilled to an adventure in a new land and were drawn out in a new expression.

The authors represented in this volume have embarked on the same journey. The same field has been suggested to them. In some cases they have followed the painters in settings and moods. They would be the last to claim

**A Canadian Art Movement.* Macmillan.

that their efforts had met with a large degree of success. For this book is, after all, only one of the first gestures, one of the first steps of the journey. Where it will lead us no one can tell. The artists have gone furthest; theirs was the joy of first discovery; theirs has been the greatest dedication. The chronicler of their initial adventure writes: "In the landscapes of some of our Canadian painters, the spirit of our north, the spirit of Canada projects itself forward in positive, bold relief. It is an inspiring thing, clean, robust, severe, ecstatic, full of faith, full of vitality and power."* Nor have the painters been content with the north. Exploring far afield, they have sought coasts and mountains, barren Arctic lands and remote habitant villages. The poet, novelist, and dramatist are following in their path. The painters have made them aware of a new country; it is for them to create action and character—to express its spirit and life more completely. As yet our literature has been too derivative, as was American literature in Whitman's day. The time has come for it to break free from tradition, to mate itself with the new spirit that is here, and to create proudly and self-sufficiently in its own right.

The sense of imminent adventure is upon us. We should have no fear. As a people we have something of the poise and restraint of the British, while we retain "the urge, the ardour, the unconquerable will", of Whitman's America. Unlike our neighbours to the south, three generations of prosperity have not set us in the mould of materialism and success; we are as young as the vast new country that their poet celebrated. Our capacities for creative and spiritual growth are as unlimited. Our idealism is as fresh and untrammelled. It is an idealism of our own, owing something to the experience of an older, war-weary world, something to our peculiar fusion of races, and something to the spirit of our wide-reaching land. The North makes the greatest contribution to this spirit; to use Lawren Harris' term,

*F. B. Housser. "Art National and Universal." *The Canadian Student*

it has a "spiritual clarity" which flows into our lives and makes them clearer and richer, giving distinction and national character to our idealism. Great things may be done if we have faith in ourselves and in our dynamic and creative power as a nation.

Three lines of advance are open to the Canadian dramatist. The first is in the direction of realistic drama. This will be for the most part a drama of simple people and elemental passions. It will touch upon life in the cities, both eastern and western, but it will not be a sophisticated drama. It will deal chiefly with the lives of old pioneers in southern Ontario and new pioneers in the West and North, with fishermen on lake shore and coast, and lonely inhabitants of far-flung mining and frontier towns. It will send its roots deeply into the soil, tracing its origins back into the past of all the Canadian peoples—not only the French and English, but the new Canadians of the prairies. Wherever the hardships of life are being faced it will find its themes. The early naturalistic plays of Hauptmann and the Free Stage Society, the realistic middle-class drama of Houghton and the Manchester School, the peasant drama of the Abbey Theatre in Ireland and the Scottish National Theatre in Glasgow, the native folk drama of Paul Green, and the northern plays of Merrill Denison, are examples to encourage us on our way.

In the second place we are in a position to create a unique romantic drama. The romance of early discovery and exploration, begun long ago in the time of Jacques Cartier, has continued through the centuries and still goes on with undiminished interest. It is a drama in which Indian guides, French missionaries and voyageurs, and English explorers have played a part; its scene of action extends from coast to coast and north to the frozen regions of the Arctic—a background vast and picturesque. Others as well as explorers have lived adventurous lives against that background—traders, trappers, lumbermen, and prospectors. And beyond the white man's experience is another and more legendary tradition—of the Red

Man and his beliefs—of life in a primeval forest. An admirable example of what can be done to preserve this tradition and use it as a basis for creative expression is found in Marius Barbeau's account of the Indians on the north-west coast, "The Downfall of Temlaham"*, in which Canadian artists cooperated to record the regalia, ceremonies, and totem poles of the Indians against the majestic setting of the Skeena and its surrounding mountains. But only a beginning has been made. Canada yet awaits its Bret Harte of the theatre who will uncover the rich and exciting treasure of frontier life and incident, and its Synge and Yeats who will re-create the romance and poetry of folk-lore and legend.

There is a third line of advance possible: toward the creation of a Canadian "Art of the Theatre" and related Drama different from the accepted pattern of both realistic and romantic plays. By a Canadian "Art of the Theatre" we mean a tradition in the staging of plays that will be an expression of the atmosphere and character of our land as definite as our native-born painting and sculpture. To mention only three instances, the canvases of Lauren Harris and Arthur Lismer, and the natural sculpture of Elizabeth Wood, are indicative of the possible nature of such a national theatre art—and should encourage us to proceed in this direction. If the strength and individuality of the work of our painters —their artistic achievements in form, rhythm, design, and colour, and their spiritual contributions in austerity, symbolism, and idealism—if these can be brought into our theatre and developed in conjunction with the creation of a new drama that will call for treatment in their spirit and manner and be closely allied to them in content and style, we shall have a new theatre art and drama here that will be an effective revelation of our own vision and character as a people.

The plays written with such an end in view would not be the "slices of life" of realistic drama, nor would they adhere to the rigid, conventional three or four-act form.

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Rather they would be more "atmospheric" and spiritual —possessed of a greater fluency in content and style— a greater imaginative splendour. They might resemble the Wagnerian music-dramas, or the tragedies of Shakespeare and Sophocles in sustained intensity and lyric movement. It was in the designment of these that Adolphe Appia and Gordon Craig made the first great experiments in the modern art of the theatre. Our dramatists should attempt to write plays on the same plane. We cannot aim too high. It is not enough that we discover in Canada a vast and hitherto unexplored subject-matter; like Whitman, we must discover a new style, ample enough to meet and express it. There should be a boundless energy in our dramatic writing, a restless search for new forms. We should not discard the old. The realistic play, powerfully written, will always remain an adequate vehicle for the portrayal of many phases of life. But in our experimentation we must be willing to pass beyond the old restricted forms and discover new styles, new ways of achieving self-expression.

In the theatre, as well as in literature, the changing centuries have brought changing conceptions of form and style. In literature classicism has been succeeded by romanticism, romanticism by realism. In the theatre the naturalistic drama of the last century was an improvement on the French well-made plays and the dreamy artificialities of the romantic school; but it was in turn superseded by the drama of ideas, domestic drama, symbolic plays, dramatic fantasies, expressionistic pieces and many other types. The living theatre is a growing, changing theatre. Always it moves forward; always it seeks new sources of strength; always it holds out an inviting hand to the visionary and seeker after truth; always from its dim origins in ritual and worship it has known and expressed the deepest aesthetic and spiritual impulses of the human spirit. It has been a home to all the arts, joining with them in a restless attempt to reach varying expressions of these profound and lasting impulses. The dance has been part of it, and music from

the beginning. The visual arts of painting and sculpture have always been near it; in the last quarter of a century they have drawn closer to it than ever before. The theatre has other traditions beside that of the spoken word to maintain. And it has never been so vigorously alive, so varied in its approach to reality, as in the last two decades, when the tide of reaction against photographic realism and what O'Neill calls "the banality of surfaces" has produced in the theatre such tendencies as symbolism, formalism, stylization, constructivism, and expressionism. "The world is here!" exclaims Edsmid, one of the German theorists, "it would be absurd to repeat it!" And Konrad Lange asserts, "The illusion of actuality is not a condition of the artistic."

True, in such a movement as expressionism in Germany, the reaction against realism has been carried so far by playwrights like Hasenclever and Kokoschka that the characters have become dehumanized and the action incoherent and chaotic. But in a play like "Masses and Men" by Ernst Toller, in which choruses of workers, bankers, and gaolers form a suggestive and colourful background to the main characters—their movements arranged after the fashion of a ballet against sombre settings, with impulsions of light and choruses accentuated by alternate chanting and colour, motion and antiphony contributing to the feeling that surges through the play—there are perhaps the elements of a new technique being born in the theatre.

The important thing is that we should be aware of these tendencies; that we should believe in the illimitable possibilities of the theatre for change and growth. We must learn to depend resolutely on our own creative spirit. As A.E., the Irish mystic, suggests, neither the culture nor the art of another people can be finally a substitute for our own. We must feel the thing that is here, and search till we find the style that will best express it. We must feel the "earth resonances" and spiritual emanations of our soil and natural forms. Our innate ideality should force itself on our art, changing

our expression till it is in line with our fundamental character. We want realistic and romantic drama in Canada, glowing with the power and appeal of living dialogue and intense and human action. But we should be aware of wider artistic opportunities. The challenge to our dramatists is to seek an ever varying expression of our life, in poetry and symbolism as well as prose and realism; and to join hands with our painters, sculptors, dancers, and musicians to create new combinations of the arts, lifting them all to inspired levels of beauty and significance in which they may be universal, being the reflection of the vision and beauty of a new people in a new land.

THE BONE SPOON

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

By Betti P. Sandiford

CHARACTERS

Henri Duval
Louis de Courcy
Gaston Soufflot
} *Refugees from the Huronia Mission*

Prudence, *a girl of seventeen, a visitor to Georgian Bay*

Mary, *a Summer resident and youthful hostess to Prudence*

Gordon, *a Summer resident*

Murray, *Mary's brother*

Elizabeth, *Gordon's sister*

The Play begins in the year 1650; a lowering of lights indicates the passage of time to the present day. The action takes place in the half hour immediately following the setting of the sun at the close of a fine day in September.

WHILE the division into two scenes makes "The Bone Spoon" episodic, and the second scene does not sustain the pathos and heroic feeling of the first, the play gives a sense of the passage of time in a wild, unfertile land. The author is a summer resident in the Georgian Bay district. In her own words: "What I wished to convey was the idea of such different happenings in a setting which has been unchanged throughout the centuries. The scene took place, for me, not ten minutes away from our cottage. Looking out on the stretch of water near Split Rock, I have often felt how identical the whole surroundings must have appeared to those early pioneers who paddled down to Penetang from the French River. I have tried to give this impression through Prudence."

The tragic episode of Gaston Soufflot is told with restraint and power, against a background of dark and moving beauty. Its successful telling should prove an encouragement to other Canadian dramatists to work over the rich materials of our adventurous past and to create action against other backgrounds as immense.

In the second scene the legend is all around Prudence; it emerges "out of the rock." The subconscious influence of place and mood on her sensitive spirit gives distinction to her re-enactment of the story.

Betti P. Sandiford was born in London, England, of Scottish parents. As a girl she acted a good deal in various productions. After several years in Manchester, she came to Toronto in 1913.

She has written two other plays. In the first competition for Canadian one-act plays held by the Women's Canadian Club in 1921, her play "Crows" was awarded the prize. It was produced in 1923 by the Rosedale Community Club, Toronto, and in 1929 by the Players' Guild of University College. It was published in March, 1922, in the *Canadian Magazine*. A second play, "Camp Owatagys", in manuscript, was produced in 1930 at the University of Toronto Schools by Mr. Charles E. Phillips.

THE BONE SPOON

SCENE: *A rocky island in Georgian Bay. When the curtain rises the sun has just set. The foreground of the stage represents a fairly level stretch of rock broken here and there by boulders of various sizes. A few scrubby bushes are growing in the crevices. To the extreme left, as the audience sees it, there rises a cliff, topped by a group of typically bent and stunted pine trees. This cliff slopes down at the back of the stage and rises again, but not so high, on the extreme right. The back drop should represent the open lake with the outline of the Christian Islands on the horizon and a shoal or two in the middle distance.*

The west is behind the rock R. and the colours of the sunset, glowing in the sky, are reflected in the water. Behind the rock L. the sky is a pale green with the moon just appearing. In the opening between the two cliffs, the bow of a birch-bark canoe can be seen where it has been drawn up from the water.

HENRI DUVAL *is standing by the trees on the cliff top L. looking towards the west. In the foreground* LOUIS DE COURCY *and* GASTON SOUFFLOT *are lying on the rock, the latter asleep, covered with a crude blanket. A few belongings are scattered near them. All three are clad in ragged clothes, but* DE COURCY *contrives an air of elegance in spite of everything. He and* DUVAL *are men of thirty or more, but* GASTON *is a youth, not more than eighteen.*

DUVAL. 'Tis gone! The sun has set, de Courcy.

DE COURCY. Gone! Yea! Gone like the Mission, like our brave priests, like our hopes. All gone! Sunk beneath the horizon; bathed in blood and soon to be forgotten in the darkness of night. Sunk like the sun, but, unlike it, to rise no more.

DUVAL. The setting of the sun was to be our signal for departure. We have slept our sleep and rested us well from our fatigue. 'Tis time we were away. Would to God I could see some sign of Father David and his party. Come hither, de Courcy! Thine eyes are more sharp than mine, yet I doubt that even thy sharp eyes will see any speck on these accursèd waters.

DE COURCY [*Climbing up beside* DUVAL *and surveying the water in all directions*]. Not one!

DUVAL. Then must they have passed us while still we slept.

DE COURCY. A murrain on it all! Without them we will be at pains to find the channel.

DUVAL. Gaston knows it. He shall guide us.

DE COURCY [*Looking down on the sleeping youth*]. The poor Gaston! So faithful, so brave, so young! Methinks his sickness is more sudden than was mine or thine.

DUVAL. 'Tis true. Had we not landed when we did this morning, even on this barren rock, where he could lay him down— [*He breaks off.*] Dost think that he will rise refreshed?

DE COURCY. I know not. 'Tis a sorry plight in which we find ourselves, Duval.

DUVAL. In God's mercy we yet have grain and to spare. We can tarry a little if Gaston's fever has not abated, and we are safe from the Iroquois.

DE COURCY. They will trouble us no more. They think us all dead within the fortress. We poor foolish French dying for a handful of Huron savages, facing starvation and disease, torture and the stake.

[*They stand silent watching the sky.*

DUVAL. A wondrous sky! Were we not so far from friends, so near to foes, I could find it in my heart to wish I were skilled in painting.

DE COURCY. Much good would thy painting do thee, an thou couldst, here in this wild and weary land. We were as madmen to leave our own fair France to try to colonize this forsaken country. Of what use has been the sacrifice? Brave men lost. Our sainted Fathers—on whose souls be peace—[*They cross themselves.*] enduring untold agonies. The privations we have faced far from home and native land! What has been gained? A few hundred miserable savages, of a surety, have embraced the Faith, but will they remain faithful now that the Mission, like yonder sun, has failed to give its light?

DUVAL. What have we not suffered!

DE COURCY. *Our* sufferings have been as naught. But the Fathers, Duval! The tortures! When I think on Father Daniel, him that I knew as a lad at home, bound and burning in his cabin.

DUVAL. Simple that to what Father Brébeuf endured. 'Tis appalling to recall. A baptism of boiling water: a blazing belt of tar and rosin! By our Lady! 'twas too much for mortal man.

DE COURCY. A like fate must have been our own had we not fled to yonder island. And now we stand, the last to gaze upon its shores.

DUVAL. Right glad am I to gaze my last on't. If by God's good mercy I set foot on France again, there do I stay with my dear wife and little son. My son, whom I have never seen. Yet—'tis a passing fair country.

DE COURCY. Fair, but of no use to mankind. Here can one grow no crops, pasture no herds, build no barns.

DUVAL. Peradventure a day may come when all will be changed.

DE COURCY. How can this change? A land infested with inhuman savages, where no food can grow: the fertile portions only reached by toilsome journeyings through pestiferous woods and over lakes swept by rough winds. These very trees stand as if the west wind was for ever blowing. [*He stamps on the rock.*] This rock is eternal and was not formed for change. Do these poor trees die, others of a like kind will take their places. Nay, nay, Duval, 'tis useless to mankind.

DUVAL. See! the lad wakens.

[*He hurries down and kneels by* GASTON'S *side.*

GASTON [*Trying to rise but sinking back again*]. I pray thee, good Duval, fetch me water. [DUVAL *runs past the canoe prow and disappears.* DE COURCY *comes to* GASTON'S *side.*

DE COURCY. How is it with thee now, Gaston?

GASTON. I am dying.

DE COURCY. Never say that, lad. We will soon have thee with Father David and he will give thee of his simples.

GASTON. It will avail me nothing. De Courcy, thou must go on without me. I can go no further. Leave me.

DE COURCY. Peace, boy, peace! Could we leave thee after what thou didst for us on the Island? Nursing us

till we were rid of that abominable plague. Thy distemper will also pass, and we will journey on by easy stages.

GASTON. Ah, promise me. I can no more. I tell thee I am dying. Did I not see my shadow fall within the grave we dug three days since? My soul is therefore dead and can I tarry far behind it?

DE COURCY. Bah! What foolish fancy is this? Thou, a Frenchman, dost thou harbour the ignorant beliefs of a savage? Shame on thee, Gaston.

GASTON. 'Tis even so. I fear not. Speed on. Thou wilt go faster lacking my weight. 'Tis useless to tarry here. The other party has passed us by. Tomorrow, storms may arise and keep thee lingering here too long. And who knows when the bloody Iroquois will return?

DE COURCY. Small fear of that. We cannot leave thee, Gaston.

GASTON. *I*, what am I? But thou art strong and Duval also. Thy lands cry to thee, de Courcy, and Duval owes his life to his lady wife and little son. Go, I beseech thee, while yet there is time. Pledge me thy word that thou wilt urge him—[*Enter* DUVAL *carrying a mug of water which he holds to* GASTON'S *lips.*] Thanks, dear friend! [DE COURCY *makes as if to draw near.*] De Courcy would speak with thee, Duval. He has to tell thee—

DUVAL [*Catching* DE COURCY'S *arm and turning him away from* GASTON]. Thou hast to tell me? Hearken first to what I must tell thee. While I dipped water for Gaston I found the large bag of maize, that which I threw upon the rocks—would that thou hadst thrown it—unlucky wight that I am.

DE COURCY. What ails the bag?

DUVAL. I must have thrown it upon a sharp rock. The sack is rent and all the grain ran out while we slept these many hours. I have gathered what I could, but 'tis pitifully little. The small bag is there, but 'twill only serve a short season.

DE COURCY. The grain has run out like our span of life, while yet we slept secure.

DUVAL. Our lives will be all done unless we haste to find Father David and the others. I curse myself. I should have watched.

DE COURCY. 'Tis fortune!

GASTON [*Sitting up with a great effort*]. 'Tis an omen! Thou see'st now, de Courcy, that what I say is true. Thou must press on. Hearken to me. The night is calm, the moon bright. There is a safe channel not far from here that will take thee shortly to the point whereon the moose was slain. Bear thou northeasterly from here until two tall trees stand far aloft above their fellows. Four days' hard paddling will bring thee to the mouth of our French River. This I know well for I traversed it but lately in the spring. Take thou the canoe and may the Good God guide thee. [*He sinks back.*

DUVAL. 'Thee' and 'thou'! Is it not 'we'?

DE COURCY. Gaston can fare no further. We must press on alone. Peradventure we will make up upon the others before dawn.

DUVAL. But leave our Gaston!

GASTON. 'Tis the only course. Food ye must have. Better one dead than three.

DE COURCY [*Gathering up their belongings*]. We will cheat this cursèd country yet. While I live, if I return not with the Father, my name is dishonoured. Go,

Duval, fetch the maize. We will leave the lad his portion. 'Twill keep his body against our speedy return. [DUVAL *goes to the canoe and returns with a small sack.* DE COURCY *measures the grain and, wrapping it in a bundle, lays it beside* GASTON.] Now let us set out.

GASTON. Go first to the other end of this island and set thy course by those twin trees. 'Tis not yet too dark to see them. [*The two men exit L.* GASTON *rises painfully and creeps on hands and knees down to the canoe, dragging the bundle of grain. He can be seen stowing it away in the nose of the canoe. He has just time to get back and lie down once more before* DUVAL *and* DE COURCY *enter.*] Did'st see them?

DE COURCY. Aye, we have seen them. [*He kneels down beside* GASTON.] Thou Gaston! We leave thee, but we return anon. Trust us lad. 'Tis hard to go without thee.

[*He kisses* GASTON *and goes hurriedly down to the canoe carrying their things.*

DUVAL [*Embracing* GASTON]. I can not bear to leave thee, Gaston. Thou true-hearted boy. My own son will be no more to me than thou hast been. [*He also leaves abruptly. He and* DE COURCY *prepare to depart.*

DE COURCY [*Returning with a spoon which he hands to* GASTON]. Here, lad, is thy spoon. Thou can'st surely not eat porridge with thy fingers. [*He tries to laugh, then catches* GASTON *in his arms once more.*

GASTON. Adieu, good Louis! Tell my lady mother that I remember her nightly in my prayers. And haste thee away.

DE COURCY. Thou, thyself, shalt tell her all.

[*He goes to help* DUVAL *and together they push the canoe out of sight. As they go* GASTON *drags*

himself to the opening and looks down, watching them depart. Their voices are heard, farewells floating back to him. He staggers to his feet and turns towards audience as if peering after his friends as they paddle away from him.

GASTON [*Coming forward and flinging out his arms*]. Adieu, adieu, adieu!

[*Their answers come faintly back over the water. He looks thoughtfully at the spoon, then gives a short, sobbing laugh and throws it away. He sinks back under his blanket once more. The stage is darkened for a moment. When the lights go up* GASTON *is gone. Voices are heard left and* PRUDENCE *and* MARY *enter, carrying cushions and books.*

PRUDENCE. Oh! just look at the sunset. Isn't it marvellous?

MARY. Yes, and the moon too. We often get good sunsets here, especially at the end of the season.

PRUDENCE. Mary, it was heavenly of you to ask me for this little visit. I've never loved any place so much. And I'm so glad there was the chance to come out here and see all the open. It's truly wonderful! Don't you wish you could paint it? No wonder they call these "the Happy Isles".

MARY. Who do?

PRUDENCE. Oh, people. You don't know how lucky you are to have grown up with this—to know it so well. Did you say that was Christian Island?

MARY [*Mechanically, and as one who has given the information often*]. Yes, that last but one to the West. It was there, you know, that the Hurons made their last

stand against the Iroquois. Or was it the Iroquois against the Hurons?

PRUDENCE. Oh, yes, I know. I have read something about them, and I'm thrilled to see the real place. Then this must have been the very route the Jesuits took on their way to the Hurons. Can't you see them paddling past?

MARY. No thanks! I'd rather not. Say, the others ought to see this sky. It is a beauty. Oh, Gordon; Oh, Murray. Hurry up and bring Elizabeth. There's a wonderful sky.

GORDON [*Appearing from L. carrying a picnic kit-bag*]. What's all the row about? Oh, I see. The sun has set. How unusual!

[*Enter* MURRAY *and* ELIZABETH *with a basket and camp kettle.*

MURRAY. Shall I go over and fetch the bus to this side? Then we shan't have to cart all this junk around.

GORDON. That's a good idea. Anything more to eat before we go?

ELIZABETH. How can you? After all you ate an hour ago.

GORDON. Well, who washed up? Heavy manual labour demands good food—and often.

ELIZABETH. There are some more marshmallows but it's too late now to start building another fire to toast them. Mary, what shall we do with all this bread? It won't fit in the basket, and it's quite dry. There's more goulash in the billy-can too—even though we all had three helpings, and Gordon five. What shall we do with it?

MARY. Well, Mother won't want it. The supply boat

comes up for the last time tomorrow, and she always has too much food at the end anyway.

MURRAY. Dump it on the rocks, Elizabeth; the gulls will have a feed. I can go down for supplies if we need them. Now, really, if you girls want to go home to get dolled up for the Dodson's dance, we'll have to step on it.

PRUDENCE. Can't we stay here instead?

MARY. Oh, no! We must go to the dance. But we needn't go just yet. Murray, your Blue Streak can do it in a few minutes. At least, you are always boasting about what it can do.

MURRAY. The boasting is to impress the ignorant, and such as only have one cylinder boats. Personally, I consider my bus a back number where speed is concerned. It took me thirty-one minutes to crawl up to Moose Point the other day. Now if our parent would only see things in the right light, I'd have a moth hydroplane. Then I could fly guests down to Toronto and over to Muskoka in no time. But will he buy one? Not he. He talks of keeping life simple. Back to nature idea. As if you could.

GORDON. No life will be simple with you about. You needn't worry. Anyway speed is not the only thing you want up here, is it? What's wrong with the primitive canoe?

MURRAY. Primitive! that's just the trouble. I want things up to date. I don't want, like Mary, to go to see old countries.

MARY. Well, a person's got to be educated and see places where things have happened.

PRUDENCE. Don't you think anything every happened here?

MURRAY. Not much. It's the slowest place; dull as ditch-water.

GORDON. She means historically, man. Unlike you, our visitor is not always thinking of speed.

PRUDENCE. I was thinking of what I'd read. About the Huronia Mission. It was so romantic!

MARY. Oh, if you start to talk about Missions, I'm going. Missions are always dull.

PRUDENCE. I guess it was anything but dull for those who took part in this one. The Jesuits must have taken ages to get here from Quebec, because they would have to carry everything they needed on their backs. I *think* they came up the Ottawa and down the French. Eventually they would have to paddle down here, right past us. I can see it all. I can't think how you're not properly thrilled.

GORDON. It's familiarity, that's all. We heard it all in our early youths. How the poor things got killed by the Hurons after all their trouble.

ELIZABETH. It wasn't the Hurons; it was the Iroquois. You're too ignorant for anything.

PRUDENCE [*Dreamily*]. The Iroquois descended on the Mission, finished the whole thing and tortured the poor Fathers dreadfully. They knew everything there was to know about torture.

GORDON. At least they didn't know about Murray's engine. Sea-Fleas were one form of torture of which they were happily ignorant.

ELIZABETH. Wouldn't those savages be surprised if they could see us now? With hotels and steamers and plenty of food.

MURRAY. I'll bet they wouldn't think we were very simple or back to nature if they could. I must try that one on Dad.

PRUDENCE. Are there any Indians on Christian Island now?

GORDON. Yes, it's a reservation. Funny-looking lot they are too. Say, did any of you go to Lenton years ago—when was it? About 1921 or thereabouts, when the Hurons and Iroquois buried the hatchet after three hundred years' warfare or something?

MARY. I believe we were all taken.

GORDON. Well, I was only a youngster, but I well remember the jest it was. There was one brave I saw, dressed in his skin plus a loin cloth. I don't know what on earth tribe he belonged to. Anyway, there was this fellow, fat and greasy, and what do you think he was doing? Pushing a reed baby carriage with twins in it. My stars! I did laugh.

ELIZABETH. Oh, I remember going. And there was an Englishwoman from the East-end of London, married to the Chief over on the Island. She told the priests that she'd had such trouble teaching the Indians to do the war dances. They were so dumb.

PRUDENCE. It doesn't sound very romantic, I'll admit. Is that all they did?

GORDON. Dear me, no! They rushed out into the water and welcomed Champlain in his big canoe; and there were long speeches and it was powerful hot. The real trouble was the movie-men. You couldn't see anything that was happening for their cameras. Of course, I was pretty small anyway.

ELIZABETH. And you know nothing about it anyway, either.

GORDON. Well, who does?

MARY. Prudence seems to.

PRUDENCE. No, I don't, but I want to. And now I've seen the country, I'm going to find out all I can. You shan't take all the romance out of this heavenly place—with your speed boats and your horrid stories. Some day I'll surprise you. I'll write a wonderfully romantic book and you'll all be glad you knew me. I'll write it about this very Island. What's its name?

MURRAY. We call it Macaroni, because we upset our only supper dish here one evening.

ELIZABETH. No! This is Pollywog, of course, because there are such swarms of pollies in the pools.

PRUDENCE. Oh, dear! Gordon, I appeal to you. What is its real name?

GORDON. Very likely it's down on the chart as Island 308, or Smith's American Camp. Something unromantic anyway.

PRUDENCE. Unromantic! It's impossible. I can't think how you can all have grown up here looking at these glorious old rocks and not thrill to something that has not changed for centuries, seeing the very waters the brave Jesuits crossed to do their duty to the savages, and not feel the romance of it all.

MURRAY. Well my old Blue Streak may not be very romantic, but I dare swear those guys would have given something to have had it. It's all right to talk about the past, but I'd rather live in the present.

GORDON. You ought to live in the future, old dear!

PRUDENCE. But you can't have the present or the future without the past. It's all part of us.

TORONTO

MARY. I think it's time we went home and danced. It's getting cold here. Help gather up these things, Elizabeth.

GORDON. I'd like to hear what Prue's going to write about. Shall I be the handsome hero?

PRUDENCE [*Who has been staring at the fading sky*]. He will be about your age—a French boy. Oh, I know, I know. I've got it all. Do let me tell you before I forget it. I read once that when the poor Hurons fled from the Iroquois and built a fort on Christian Island, nearly all those who weren't killed died of starvation and disease. Some priests and Frenchmen and Indians finally got away after the winter, but my hero is to come back and nurse some friends. May I tell you? Do sit down. I'm just bursting with ideas.

GORDON. Burst away.

MURRAY. Make it snappy.

ELIZABETH. I shall love it.

[MARY *is busy re-packing the picnic baskets.* PRUDENCE *sits on a boulder.*

PRUDENCE. Behold this same Island that we are on nearly 300 years ago. The rock just the same; the same lovely sunset and calm water. The same night hawks in the air. The same kind of trees growing up there. I love those trees; they look as if a west wind was forever blowing, even on a still night. Imagine everything just the same only, instead of us moderns, two—no three—Frenchmen. Two of them would be quite old, about thirty, and the other like Gordon only much more experienced, of course.

GORDON. Well, he was French, wasn't he?

PRUDENCE. A fine young Frenchman. He could have gone with all the rest in the Spring, but he came back and nursed his two friends until they were ready to travel. Then these three, and some others, set out in two boats—the last to leave the fated island. Everything they had suffered had been useless. The thing they set out to do was finished and a failure. They would feel this and be dreadfully depressed. On the way across the Lake the three friends would get separated from the other lot and the poor young one would take ill in his turn—very ill.

ELIZABETH. What was his name?

GORDON. Something nice and romantic, not pollywog or spaghetti, you can be sure.

PRUDENCE [*Impatiently*]. That doesn't matter just now. Can't you see them landing here? [*She points to the opening.*] They lift the sick boy ashore and think they'll have a good rest.

ELIZABETH. I know how they'd talk. "Peradventure he'll be all right soon," they'd say—that kind.

GORDON. Sure! Gadzooks, Odds Boddikins. By my halidom!

PRUDENCE. They would all be weak from sickness and lack of food and they'd lie down here in the sunshine and sleep. When the story starts they would be waking up. I think I'd have one of them looking to see if he could sight the other boat. The two older men would talk together a little anxiously. Obviously the young one is too sick to travel so they finally decide to wait a little till he gets better.

GORDON. What about eats?

PRUDENCE. Oh, they'd have some, you know. They had a long journey in front of them.

ELIZABETH. What were they anxious about, then?

PRUDENCE. Well, they wouldn't want to lose the other party in case they were attacked. Oh, I know—they wouldn't know the way without the young one—well, not so surely as he did, at any rate. Then I'll make the hero wake up and ask them to leave him behind because they can get on faster without him.

MURRAY. He was the bright bird. You see, he valued speed all right. Wouldn't they have welcomed me in my Moth, eh?

MARY. Do let her get on. We'll be here till midnight.

PRUDENCE. I've nearly finished now. Of course, they wouldn't leave him, after he'd been so good to them, but—I've got to make them go. How shall I do that? [*She jumps up, goes to the opening and stands thinking. She turns back.*] I feel it! It's coming back to me. They find they'd had an accident to some of their food. I can't think what, just now, but I will—and they've just got to go.

GORDON. Dirty work!

PRUDENCE. No—they are desperate. Can't you see them bidding him good-bye? "We'll try to come back; we'll find the others.", they'll say to him.

ELIZABETH. Think of all the goulash we've thrown out. Won't they leave him any food?

PRUDENCE. Yes, yes! [*With rising excitement*] They'll divide what's left and give him his share. Then he'll tell them how to go and when they're not looking he'll put his share in the canoe for them.

GORDON. Good stuff!

MURRAY. If they'd only had radio!

ELIZABETH. Well they hadn't. That's what made them so brave.

PRUDENCE [*Sitting down as if tired*]. He was brave. He waved them goodbye and, of course, he knows they will never come back. They may die too. I don't know that part.

GORDON [*Jumping up the cliff and waving*]. Last stand of the hero. Good-bye! Good-bye!

PRUDENCE. Come down, silly. He wouldn't do it like that. He was sick and, besides, he's French. He'd say adieu. This is how I mean him to do. [*She creeps to the opening painfully and cries with a long melancholy note.*] Adieu!! [*Her acting is good and the others watch her rather impressed. Suddenly she turns, startled.*] Did you hear anyone call?

GORDON. Sure! You wailed "adieu". [*He mimics her.*

PRUDENCE [*Puzzled*]. Did I only call once? I thought I heard it three times.

MARY. Once was enough. Now Murray and I are going to the dance. If you all want to stay here like Prudence's hero you have the bread and goulash, and *we'll* come back all right.

MURRAY. You've said it! Me for the mainland. It's going to be fun tonight, I think. But if young Dodson's going to try dancing to that bum radio of his, I'm taking our gramophone over. He doesn't understand radio and won't let me show him. I could get Holland and France for him. Now I'll go and get my unromantic boat and if you're not ready we'll go without you. Have that stuff down ready, Mary. [*Exit L.*

MARY. Wake up, Gordon! Carry the kit-bag down. I'll bring the baskets. Elizabeth, you and Prue carry the

cushions. [GORDON *lifts the bag.*] Say, did you put the can-opener in the bag or in the pocket outside?

GORDON [*Going towards opening*]. What do you think I am? In the bag, of course.

MARY [*Following*]. Well, if you put it in the pocket it will have dropped out. It always does.

[*They disappear behind cliff R., their voices heard in discussion.*

ELIZABETH [*Standing arm in arm with* PRUDENCE, *who watches the darkening sky*]. Will you write that story some day? It's rather sad, but I'll always think of it when I come to this spot.

PRUDENCE. Perhaps, I will some day. I want to write something great and romantic and brave like the country. You can't do it justice. That's what the painters must feel. It's too big and mysterious and ageless. The story's not really stupid—it would be if I had made it up—but I don't feel it came out of me. I felt it—all around me—it came up out of the rock—it was ready for me. [*She looks all around.*] I feel it so strongly that it all could have happened here—it all must have happened here. [*She wanders about as if looking for something.*] I might almost find something.

ELIZABETH [*Drawing her along*]. Come along now, dear. You must come to stay with me next year. Will you?

PRUDENCE. Indeed, I will. Thanks Elizabeth.

[*A motor-boat sounds off. The two girls gather up the cushions and make for the opening. Enter* MARY.

MARY. Gordon did put that can-opener in the pocket, after all. And it's mother's best. Do look round. It can't be far off. I'll take those cushions.

[*She goes off with load.* ELIZABETH *and* PRUDENCE *search about on the rocks.*

PRUDENCE. It won't be very easy to see it in this light. Could it drop down one of these cracks?

ELIZABETH. Very likely.

PRUDENCE [*Poking about behind boulder*]. Here it is, just as I thought. It has forced its way into this crevice. How firmly it's stuck! You'd think it had been here for ages instead of a few minutes. It won't come out. What's more I don't believe it is the can-opener. It isn't. I'm going to get it out whatever it is. Come on you obstinate thing. [*She works away.*

ELIZABETH [*Pouncing on something*]. Here's the can-opener. I've got it. Come on Prue.

PRUDENCE. No, it's coming. I'll get it *out*. What on earth is it? It's an old spoon.

ELIZABETH. Let's have a look. Why it's only a spoon someone's left on a picnic. Throw it away.

PRUDENCE. I never will. It's old, really old. Don't you see it's made of bone? You've never seen one like that before. Oh Elizabeth! don't you understand? It must be—it is—! It belonged to my French boy. It's been waiting for me all these years.

ELIZABETH. You *are* a romantic girl.

[*The others call to them to hurry up.* ELIZABETH *runs through the opening.* PRUDENCE *stands gazing at the moonlit water, then, still holding the spoon, she turns and flings out her arms. Her voice and manner suggest as far as possible* GASTON'S *voice and manner.*

PRUDENCE. Happy Isles—Adieu! Adieu! Adieu!

CURTAIN

THE MOTHER LODE

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

By Archibald F. Key

CHARACTERS

George Fairburn, *Prospector*
Joe LeBlanc, *French-Canadian trapper*
Pete Guilbert, *Prospector*
Sandy McPherson, *Prospector*
Oscar Hansen, *Prospector*

ARCHIBALD F. KEY is an Englishman by birth. At present he is the editor of an Alberta paper, *The Drumheller Mail*. He writes interestingly of his experiences:

"I've been on the verge of starvation free-lancing in Toronto. Dr. Creighton of the *Christian Guardian* and W. J. Jeffers, who was on *Saturday Night* but later went on *The Globe*, were the two men who kept me at the writing game when I was ready to go shining shoes. I've shovelled coal on the steamers, dressed windows in New York, worked in a Rhode Island cotton mill, sold books in San Francisco, worked in a Kitchener rubber plant, and at various times have drifted back to writing. I've got to write—it's my hobby, that's all.

"Was in Northern Ontario (Timmins) about three years. Worked on a local paper there and was correspondent for *The Mail and Empire*, later adding *The Ottawa Journal*, *Toronto Star* and *Globe* to my list. Came west three years ago. I've hoboed through California, and lived a full life for the past thirty-six years."

Mr. Key is the author of two other one-act plays which with "The Mother Lode" give a cross-section of the speculative urge in Northern Ontario. One deals with high-grading, and the other has stock manipulation as a plot basis.

"The Mother Lode" describes the beginning of a gold rush—the rumours, exaggeration, and secrecy which sweep the country every time a new strike is made. The prospector's life is painted in true colours. To quote the author: "When he wades through muskeg, gets bitten up with black flies, gets caught in a blizzard, he looks upon such things as just the disagreeable part of his job." And the accidental discovery of "The Mother Lode" is not overdrawn. To quote only one example: in the Kamiskotia rush of 1926 one man made a find and staked a claim right on the trail taken by hundreds of men who had preceded him during a long winter.

The characterization of Fairburn is of outstanding importance in the play. The author's words are interesting: "Fairburn to me is what the North should be. If there is any idealism in the North, Fairburn has it. I have met the type. He dreams, and loves the bush, and is afraid of our commercial civilization."

By permission of the Toronto Art Gallery

By Lawren Harris

Above Lake Superior

(Lawren Harris is the best known modernist among Canadian painters.) This much-discussed canvas embodies something of the idealism suggested in "The Mother Lode." The trees in the foreground, stripped by fire and ice, are typical of millions in the north. The mood of the country above Lake Superior and, to a certain extent, of the entire wilderness of northern Ontario and Quebec, is summarized—a mood of austerity, loneliness, and peace.

THE MOTHER LODE

SCENE: *A Clearing in the Bush. Background of burnt timber with green second growth. Tall, bleached spars point skyward, while charred trunks tip crazily at precarious angles. The ground is wet with melting snow and the trees glisten with half-frozen snow and ice. It is a dreary day—dull and humid, with the sun making half-hearted attempts to break through.*

At back stage, right, is a shelter of balsam boughs bent over. It is roofed with the same green boughs over which a traveller might throw a canvas if he desired. Toward front of stage, left, a boulder rises from the ground at a sharp angle. It is covered with green and brown overburden and there is nothing except its shape to indicate that it is rock. It is, actually, the north-east end of a syncline—an integral part of the ground. It rises about two feet out of the earth at a sharp slope.

One or two trees have fallen down which provide seats for the men. Or logs can be utilized.

NOTE: A Glossary of technical words employed in the play will be found in the notes at the back of the book.

As the curtain rises GEORGE FAIRBURN *is preparing a meal over a fire near the shelter. He is a tall, broad-shouldered prospector with weather-beaten face. He is a good physical specimen, probably 35 to 45 years old. His face denotes intelligence with a tendency toward nervousness. He has placed his snowshoes against*

the shelter and is using his pack for a seat. FAIRBURN *is dressed in high boots, khaki knee breeches, khaki shirt open at the neck, a brightly colored mackinaw, and a tweed cap which he wears at an angle.*

He is interrupted by the sound of footsteps and looks up as JOE LEBLANC *enters.* JOE *has been trapping in the north and is on his way back to his camp with pelts. He wears brightly colored clothes—a Hudson Bay coat and a bright skull cap pulled over his ears. He may also wear moccasins. He is shorter, plumper than* FAIRBURN, *carries a pack and has an animal trap slung from his shoulder. When he sees* FAIRBURN *he throws down his burden and rushes over to him.*

JOE [*Impulsively*]. You mak' beeg gol' strike, George, Yes?

FAIRBURN. Hardly that, Joe. I've got a good prospect however. Who told you?

JOE. De bush, she full of men. Some dey know nodin'—some dey know joost leetle bit an' Sandy Mac, he know what you tol' 'im.

FAIRBURN [*Rising*]. You mean there's a rush out this way, Joe, because of my discovery?

JOE. W'en men be tol' dat gol' is foun' dey nevaire ask 'Yes', 'No', or nodin'—dey get too excite.

FAIRBURN. But that's foolish. All I've got are a few samples of rock—grab samples, broken off at random. What did they tell you?

JOE [*Picking up pelts and taking them to shelter where he hangs them up*]. Ever't'in'! Pete Guilbert he say, "Fairburn, de dam fool, he foun' much gol'—he sol' t'ree claim for feefty t'ousan' dollair." I say, "Ho! ho!" I not beleeve it.

FAIRBURN. What then?

JOE. He rush t'rough 'ere wid dog team. He laugh lak hell, all tam'. He say de mine, she sen' out fortee men to stake nex' you, but he beat—he mak' beeg mon'.

FAIRBURN [*Sitting*]. Sit down Joe. Who else did you see?

JOE. Oscar Hansen, de Swede. He say your sample dey run ovair hondre' dollair an' ever'body say she beeges' fin' in year.

FAIRBURN [*Laughing*]. A hundred dollars to the ton! Surely Sandy McPherson didn't tell them that! I showed him the assay sheet. One sample ran ten dollars, another twenty-five fifty and the third a dollar seventy-five—but it's copper, not gold I'm looking for this time, Joe.

JOE [*Who has sat down*]. Sandy Mac, he nevaire say price—only "gol' in Barnicott" he shout an' hike away to de wes'.

FAIRBURN. Maybe I'm to blame for Sandy's enthusiasm. I met him in the hotel—the Queens—and told him I thought I'd made a big discovery. I was excited and nervous as I always am when I get into town.

JOE [*Interrupting*]. Yes! Sandy say you joomp aroun' lak jack-rabbit.

FAIRBURN. I wanted to tell him more, but Erland, the mine manager, walked in on us—he'd followed me down from the mine, trying to get me to give him a sampling option—so I left Sandy in a hurry.

JOE. An' Sandy he lef' in hurry too. He get grubstak' from Meest' Burnside.

FAIRBURN. So Burnside's backing him, is he. [*Stirs fire and attends to cooking.*] That means wild-catting—

staking near my claims and selling for big profits. Burnside never owned a legitimate mining claim in his life.

JOE. He tak five hondre' dollair from me. He's bad feller.

FAIRBURN. Sometimes I wonder Joe if I shouldn't follow Burnside's example—I could have money if I did, instead of grubbing along on next to nothing—but peace of mind is something.

[*Takes plateful of food and pours drink out.*

FAIRBURN. Help yourself, Joe.

JOE. Sure! [*Gets out plate and commences to eat.*] Say, George, how come you mak' dis fin'?

FAIRBURN. It's rather strange, Joe—I'd been talking about the Rouyn copper discoveries with one of the boys at my shack one night—I forgot all about it, until early one morning, I woke up suddenly. I'd been dreaming about passing the old dyke near portage three.

JOE. You mean de beeg rock down dere?

[*Points across space.*

FAIRBURN. Yes, that's the one. I'd walked across it scores of times before—in fact I'd examined it for gold years ago—but it had too much chalcopyrite—copper ore—mixed up in it.

JOE. So?

FAIRBURN. Next day I walked up the trail from my camp and picked up some of the pieces lying around—it was copper all right, so I did a bit of digging—taking off the overburden—and got some new samples, that's all.

JOE. But Erlan'—he offer you mon'?

FAIRBURN. Well, hardly. When he saw the assay report he wanted a thirty day sampling option—you know what that means—

JOE. Sure! Dey fin' out w'at she wort'.

FAIRBURN [*Rising and walking cross stage*]. Yes! *They'd* find out. A horde of men whispering to each other and lying to me most likely—when they'd get through I wouldn't know anything—and then they'd make me an offer.

JOE. Dat's w'at you call easy mon'.

FAIRBURN. Maybe it is—but there's more satisfaction in doing the work myself—tracing the vein, bit by bit —until I know I've got something worth while.

JOE. You're funny boy, George.

[FAIRBURN *picks up his dishes and places them to one side.*

FAIRBURN. Joe, I'm going back to the portage for some supplies I've cached there.

JOE. I go wid you.

FAIRBURN. No, there's not much to pack. This sudden thaw means I've got to take the long trail to camp instead of going on the ice. Will you be here when I come back?

JOE. Sure t'ing. I 'elp you pack t'ings den.

FAIRBURN. That's great. You can stay the night at my place. [*Exits left.*

[JOE *rises and, to pass the time, he picks up his traps to examine them. A rivet is loose so he takes hammer out of pack and looks about for improvised anvil. Finding none he goes to the rear of the boulder, and dislodges a small piece of rock from the ground. After making repairs*

he throws the rock back stage near FAIRBURN'S *pack where it lies unnoticed. A dog team is heard while* JOE *is at work, making its way slowly on the trail. The crack of a whip and a voice—*PETE GUILBERT'S*—urging the animals along.*

GUILBERT [*Off-stage*]. Haw there! Dolly! Husky!—mush, ya good-fer-nothin's.

[JOE *goes to right stage to watch progress of newcomer. He waves his hand.*

GUILBERT [*Off-stage*]. Hullo, there, Joe. [*To dogs*] Woa! Stand still, you.

[*He enters with whip in one hand—short stick and long lash—and carrying pack which he has taken off his sleigh.*

JOE. So, Pete, you t'rough stakin'?

GUILBERT. I'll say I'm through. Look at me—wet to th' skin—an' all because I'm a full-blooded sap. [*Removes his mackinaw and gloves and prepares to open pack for food.*] Frozen stiff an' hungry, that's what I am.

JOE. Why, Pete, w'at you do dis tam'?

GUILBERT. Do! My God! man, what didn't I do? I reckon the joke's on me an' ol' man Schwartz this time.

JOE. Mister Schwartz—you stake for heem too, yes?

GUILBERT. You bet I did. He didn't want to put up the money at first but he came acrost.

JOE. An' you saw Fairburn 'is beeg strike?

GUILBERT. Naw! I don' believe he ever had one. Why, Joe, there ain't a sign of rock—nothin' but overburden an' muskeg.

JOE. So you lose out, eh?

GUILBERT. Well, I took a chance when I came acrost Sandy's discovery post an' staked six claims. It was hell, I'm tellin' yer.

JOE. But you tol' me w'en you—

GUILBERT [*Interrupting*]. Never mind what I said when I came out, see.

JOE. Maybe the snow, she hide it.

GUILBERT. What do you know about it anyways. I'm a prospector an' you're just a trapper. If yer want to know what I think, George Fairburn's bush crazy—he just imagined it.

JOE. He tell me 'No'—but then!

GUILBERT. D'ya mean yer've seen Fairburn?

JOE. He lef' five meenute ago—he come back soon.

GUILBERT. An' when he does I'll tell 'im a few things. [*Starting to eat*] Want some?

JOE [*Pulling out pipe and plug*]. No, I smoke.

[*Sits on log.*

GUILBERT. Yer know, Joe, I figured I'd clean up a few hundred dollars this trip an' instead I'll be money out.

JOE. You hang on, maybe, till George he prove up hees claim.

GUILBERT. Listen 'ere. I didn't come out 'ere ta sit aroun' while George digs up th' township—I'm all fer a quick turnover an' let the other guy take a chance.

JOE. But since you stake you better hang on, Pete.

GUILBERT. Buddy! There's two reasons why my claims won't be recorded: first, Schwartzie's not dat kind—an' second, I don' believe there's a durned

chanct that George'll find anythin' if he looks fer the next hundred years.

[JOE *gathers more sticks for the fire while* GUILBERT *eats.*

GUILBERT. George's a good scout, ya know, Joe, but this livin' in th' bush all the time's made 'im too honest, that's my opinion.

JOE. Dat's why dey call heem crazy in town maybe.

GUILBERT. No. that's not it exac'ly. Ya see, he does act queer sometimes.

JOE. He act scare, you mean.

GUILBERT. Ya, that's it. Lookin' from side to side an' back of 'im when he's walkin' on th' street—same as if the cops was after 'im—an' he 'ardly speaks to anybody —just sits in th' hotel all by 'isself an' when he does talk he's stammerin' all th' time.

JOE. But de bush, she not scare heem.

GUILBERT. Yer right, Joe. He's a different man out 'ere—funny isn't it? I remember stoppin' at 'is camp onct—

JOE [*Interrupting*]. Some more men dey come up de trail, Pete.

GUILBERT [*Jumping up*]. Yer right. Some more suckers I reckon. Now we'll find out if there's anythin' to George's story.

[*Enter* SANDY MCPHERSON *and* OSCAR HANSEN. *Both men are wet and tired. They have been walking through mud. Snowshoes hang down from their packs.*

MCPHERSON [*As he enters*]. Holy Mike, Oscar! Look who's here. Did you fall for it too, Pete?

GUILBERT. If yer mean George's discovery, I'll say I did—fell hard.

HANSEN [*Philosophically*]. Well, you've got lots of company. The woods are full of men.

GUILBERT. Ol' man Schwartz—he grubstaked me—said he was land poor before I came this way but now he'll 'ave a few lakes to 'is name if he wants 'em. Fer two days I blazed me lines up to th' knees in water.

[MCPHERSON *and* OSCAR *take coats off and get close to fire.* GUILBERT *motions to food.*

GUILBERT. 'Elp yerselves, boys.

[MCPHERSON *and* HANSEN *get plates out.*

HANSEN. We're to the west of George's property so we've location if that means anything.

MCPHERSON. Mean anything! You've said it, Oscar. Just think of it—that crazy fool's been prospecting in these parts for fifteen years and what has he found?

HANSEN. He got some spectacular showings in the south-east section when he first came out.

MCPHERSON. But he's never done anything with them so what does it matter?

GUILBERT. My opinion is there aint a vein runnin' within ten miles of this place.

HANSEN. Mind you, there may be something yet. If George has found a vein it's bound to run somewhere.

MCPHERSON. He's bushed. Why he was just raving to me about this find and then he quit suddenly and beat it.

HANSEN. But the assay sheet, Sandy?

MCPHERSON. What of it! Even a crazy nut can write figures on a piece of paper.

GUILBERT. Or it could've been one he'd picked up somewheres.

MCPHERSON. Yes that could have been it. [*Waves his arm over space.*] You've only to look at the country to know it's no good.

GUILBERT [*Rising*]. It's th' most discouragin' outlook I've ever seen.

HANSEN. Well, we'll learn better some day.

MCPHERSON. One thing's certain, I'll never beat it off again until I get real proof—even if I lose out waiting for it.

GUILBERT [*Sitting on boulder*]. You betcha Sandy. Ev'ry time we 'ear a rumour we jump off like a pack of greenhorns.

MCPHERSON. It's about time we had more sense.

HANSEN. And you'll find *me* laughing at the other fellows next time.

MCPHERSON. The prospector's an easy mark, that's all he is.

GUILBERT. An' he gets all het up ev'ry time he 'ears about a guy stakin' a claim.

[*There is a slight pause while the men pass food around.*

MCPHERSON. Bill Swanbon, the Indian, was telling me about a rush up north.

HANSEN. When was this, Sandy?

MCPHERSON. Just before I picked up with you—three days ago I reckon.

GUILBERT. Was there much to th' yarn?

MCPHERSON. He said there'd been a big strike in Gorman township—

HANSEN. That's about fifty miles beyond the transcontinental line.

MCPHERSON. Yes, that's the place. Bill said a bunch had gone in by air and a lot of old-timers were making the trail.

GUILBERT. Well, 'ere's one who's not goin' ta get excited when some smart Alec pans out a lot of inside dope.

HANSEN. This country's big enough to keep us all scratching for the next century—without worrying about the other fellow's luck.

MCPHERSON. This trip's settled me. I'm through with prospecting.

GUILBERT. Same 'ere Sandy. It's not what it's cracked up ta be.

HANSEN [*Optimistically*]. Anyway we're over the worst now. There's a good trail back to town.

MCPHERSON [*Jumping up*]. Worst over! Nothing doing. Havn't I got to face mister bloody Burnside and take his dirt because he's lost a few dollars.

HANSEN. But you've lost just as much, Sandy.

MCPHERSON. That cheap skate won't think so. He thinks he owns you—body and soul—when he sends you out. Curse him.

GUILBERT. Why did yer go to 'im, then?

MCPHERSON. He was the first man I met—and I wanted to get out before the rush started, that's why.

GUILBERT. Aw, fergit it. The jaunt's got on yer nerves. Shoot 'im a line an' pick up some rock on yer way in [*Sees piece* JOE *has thrown away.*] There's a

chunk over there—give 'im that, he won't know any different.

MCPHERSON. You don't know Burnside then. He's pulled all those crooked tricks himself years ago.

JOE [*Who has been sitting back stage examining his pelts*]. You' right, Sandy. Dat Burnside he fin' out ever't'in'.

HANSEN [*Who has walked to leftstage*]. Say boys, look who's coming up the township line. If it isn't George Fairburn himself.

JOE. He go to hees camp now for two-t'ree week.

GUILBERT. Fer God's sake, fellers, don't take everythin' he says fer gospel. [*Enter* FAIRBURN.

MCPHERSON. Making for your camp, George?

FAIRBURN. Yes, Sandy, I'm heading that way. Hello, you fellows. On your way back to town?

GUILBERT. You bet. We came out to look at this 'ere find of yours an' incidentally to get in on th' groun' floor.

FAIRBURN. You look disappointed, Pete.

GUILBERT. I'll say we are. We're ashamed to go back an' tell th' sharks what the country looks like.

MCPHERSON. I can't see what you want to fool around here for, George. Overburden and muskeg—that's all we've found.

HANSEN. What's this you're pulling on the mine?

FAIRBURN. It's straight enough—but it's got to be proven up first.

MCPHERSON. But there's nothing there to prove up that I can see. We came across your claims but we couldn't find any rock, could we, Oscar?

HANSEN. Except the old dyke.

FAIRBURN. Well, that's it, Oscar.

MCPHERSON. Have you gone *clean* daffy, George? Every prospector in the north knows that landmark.

FAIRBURN. No, I'm not daffy—at least I think I'm not. I've walked past the dyke scores of times myself without thinking much about it. I looked it over years ago—but it's copper as well as gold this time.

MCPHERSON. But it's the only outcropping in that part of the township—you can't make a mine out of that.

FAIRBURN. When I met you in the hotel, Sandy, I meant to tell you all about it—and I would have if Erland hadn't walked in on us.

MCPHERSON. So that's why you left?

FAIRBURN. Yes. He'd been bullying me half an hour before, and I hadn't got over it. Oh, if those men would only come out here to talk business with me, but they get me in their offices, surrounded by bell-buttons, telephones, and stenographers, and I don't get a chance to think things out.

HANSEN. But what *have* you got, George?

FAIRBURN. I think I've landed the best prospect in years.

GUILBERT [*In sarcastic tone*]. Another Noranda, eh?

FAIRBURN [*Ignoring interruption*]. It seems to dip at a sharp angle—the end of a syncline possibly—that's why I like the looks of it.

HANSEN. What did the mine officials say?

FAIRBURN. They were interested, naturally. They wanted a sampling option.

GUILBERT. Erland's interested because of yer rep—but samplin' options don't cost nothin'.

FAIRBURN. There's more than that to it, Pete. The geology's right—greenstone and quartz porphyry intrusions—and lots of chalcopyrite—which means copper these days.

GUILBERT. An' don't fergit th' muskeg. That stuff goes deeper then hell. Give me a township what's high an' dry an' I'll have faith in it.

MCPHERSON. Pete's right, George. You may have the right idea but it'll take you a long time to show me.

HANSEN. You couldn't sell it to me on a bet. This is the first time I've been out this way but I've found nothing to get excited about.

FAIRBURN. You three are pretty much alike. Have you ever looked for small, insignificant signs? Men like yourselves figure if you don't get spectacular showings on surface that the country's no good.

GUILBERT. I like ta see free gold an' lots of it.

FAIRBURN. It's good to find free gold but it doesn't always mean there's a mine there.

MCPHERSON. But you've got to find rock first.

FAIRBURN. I'm satisfied that this township's a paying proposition for some company—maybe it'll take a bit longer to develop but it'll last longer.

HANSEN. But what do you keep holding out for? You've held back this country because you wouldn't sell your other claims.

FAIRBURN. That's true I suppose. I've been accused of that more than once.

MCPHERSON [*With heat*]. You never think of the other fellow, is that it?

FAIRBURN. No, you're wrong. I've never encouraged anyone to come staking in this direction. I'm sorry if I misled you this time, Sandy.

GUILBERT. But they come jus' the same—the saps.

HANSEN. When you made your discovery down south everybody could have cleaned up a nice piece of change if you'd sold.

FAIRBURN. Sold to whom? To wildcat speculators—like Burnside and the rest of them. Well, it goes against the grain with me.

MCPHERSON. As if the mining game wasn't all speculation.

FAIRBURN. It's something you boys don't understand. I love this country—it's mine. This little hill we're on is named after me and so is the township over there [*pointing to left*] and that means a lot to me.

HANSEN. That's just sentiment.

FAIRBURN. I know. Folks in town say I'm bush crazy—I've heard it—even the kids think I'm queer.

HANSEN. [*Apologetically*]. Not exactly that, George.

FAIRBURN. Maybe I am queer, Ocsar, but when I'm out here—all alone most of the time—I do a lot of thinking. I talk to the trees—grizzled, charred stumps most of them—that went through the fire with me. I listen to the animals and feel I've something in common with them.

MCPHERSON. But what in God's name has that to do with this find?

FAIRBURN. [*Vehemently*]. It's their bush as well as ours and I'll keep it for them until civilization sends us all further north.

GUILBERT. It's civilization what pays the big money.

FAIRBURN. I know! The other day, when Erland wanted me to sign his agreement, I saw the road to easy money—but I couldn't do it.

MCPHERSON. But do you think it's fair to us, George?

GUILBERT. I can't see anythin' square about it meself. 'Ere we've staked in Barnicott on th' strength of yer new find an' yer holdin' off again.

HANSEN. If there's anything at all in the township, you've got it, George—and you've got to sell before we can get our money back.

GUILBERT. The boys are right. You're kind of a square-shooter but yer lettin' us down again. D' you think those minin' companies give a damn whether there's gold or not—No sir! they don't.

MCPHERSON. All they think about is stock.

GUILBERT. An' if they see a chance to clean up, they do it, pronto.

HANSEN. You're so honest you can't see through the game.

FAIRBURN. I'm sorry, but I can't do it. [*He is agitated.*] I can't. I've got to be sure of my discovery. [*Walks across stage.*] I'm going to sink test pits—trace the vein system—it must run somewhere.

GUILBERT. Runs nothin'. Listen 'ere! You've let the boys down before so why not make up to 'em fer onct an' sell what you've got?

HANSEN. And you'll have money to work your old claims, old man.

MCPHERSON. What difference does it make so long as we clean up on the deal? Don't be a piker, George.

FAIRBURN [*Pacing back and forth nervously*]. I can't sell—I won't sell, I tell you. I've got to make sure first.

HANSEN. And then?

FAIRBURN [*Pauses in his stride*]. And then—[*slowly*] —I'll leave my old log cabin—my home—and go further into the bush. [*With fear in his voice*] I'm afraid of the city—I'm afraid of men when I'm back there—they all want to cheat me, to use me for their own ends. That's why they think I'm crazy—[*softer*] but out here we're all comrades.

MCPHERSON. Comrades? Yes! but that doesn't pay back what we've spent, does it?—and it doesn't put me right with Burnside.

FAIRBURN [*Thoughtfully*]. Sandy, I never thought of that.

GUILBERT [*Seeing an opportunity*]. An' what about me an' Schwartzie? Ain't we all in th' soup wid those guys?

HANSEN. Yes, George. There's another side to the story. We were kind of impulsive in coming out, but we were banking on you after all.

FAIRBURN [*Meditatively*]. Burnside, Schwartz, Erland, and the others—intimidating all of us prospectors—trying to make us as they are, and ready to use us until we drop dead on the trail.

MCPHERSON [*Hopefully*]. Well, what about it, George? Will you sell?

FAIRBURN [*Hesitates—then suddenly*]. No! I won't sell—but I'll buy—buy all your claims.

GUILBERT [*In disgust*]. Now I know yer nuts.

FAIRBURN. If you believe I've let you down, I'll take over your claims so you'll break even.

HANSEN. Talk sense, George.

FAIRBURN. I am talking sense. I haven't much money but I've got faith—faith that some day I'll prove up this find.

MCPHERSON [*Suddenly*]. I've got an idea. Let's do it and get in on the Gorman rush.

GUILBERT. That's an idea, Sandy.

FAIRBURN. So *you've* heard about it.

MCPHERSON. Why! What do you know about it?

FAIRBURN. It's supposed to be a rich find—free gold—quartz vein six feet wide and traced two hundred feet—That's what I heard before leaving town.

GUILBERT [*Eager to be off*]. We can cut through the bush to steel and get outfitted there. What say, Oscar?

HANSEN. No! Not for me. [*To* GEORGE] You know these claims aren't worth anything—they're not recorded and won't be either.

FAIRBURN. Don't worry about me, Oscar. Some day I'm going to find what I'm looking for, but the speed I work at doesn't satisfy you—or the men who sent you out.

MCPHERSON. Quit stalling, Oscar. It'll square me with Burnside and we'll all make money.

HANSEN. I'd like to go—but not on George's money.

GUILBERT. Aw! You should worry. Let's get this thing settled quick.

MCPHERSON. I don't see why we're not on our way.

GUILBERT. Come on, Oscar. Yer c'n pay George back when we've made a killin'!

HANSEN [*Weakening*]. What about taking a loan from George—and giving him our claims?

GUILBERT. Any way suits me so long's we get a move on.

MCPHERSON. If it makes you feel better we'll look at it that way.

HANSEN. We can stake George through the winter when he's broke.

FAIRBURN. I've got enough money to keep me going so you needn't worry about me. You say this country's no good—I say it is. If I've enough gambling spirit to play poker with you once in a while, I should be sport enough to take a chance on a game I know better—and that's prospecting in Barnicott township.

HANSEN. But how much do we want, Sandy?

FAIRBURN. Name your figure and I'll give you a cheque. [*Pulls out cheque book.*

MCPHERSON. I'm out about forty dollars—suppose we make it a hundred.

HANSEN. Okay with me.

GUILBERT [*Who is gathering up his equipment*]. 'Ere's all th' dope on that duck pond I've located. Sell it to Erland fer a country estate. Good fishin' an' boatin'. [*Hands* FAIRBURN *a paper.*

MCPHERSON [*Also giving paper over in return for cheque.* I think you're a damned fool, George, for not coming with us.

[*The three men are eager to be on the way.* JOE *helps them get packs together and carries them to* GUILBERT'S *sleigh.*

FAIRBURN [*To* HANSEN]. So far as I'm concerned, I'm buying these claims.

GUILBERT [*Over his shoulder*]. Like hell you are. We should pay yer fer takin' 'em.

HANSEN [*Giving paper to* FAIRBURN]. Good luck, old man. It may be an even break after all. We've all been in the north since the early days but we're still looking for that old mother lode that's going to make us into millionaires.

FAIRBURN. That's so. When I first came north I was like the rest of you—wanted to make a stake in a hurry and get out—but here I am and here you are. We'll never get out anyway because once you've tasted the game, it gets into your bones.

GUILBERT [*Putting gloves on*]. When we've made a lucky strike, we've lost the makin's.

HANSEN [*Ready to depart*]. If we had your faith, George—and your patience, I suppose we'd be content to stick around here, but instead of that we go on any wild-goose chase and trust to luck.

MCPHERSON [*Making exit with* HANSEN]. Well, Oscar, it takes all sorts to make a country and the first silver nugget in Cobalt wasn't found by faith, was it? Good-bye, George. Here's hoping. [*Exit.*

GUILBERT. George Fairburn! If I make me stake this time I'll buy yer th' best bottle o' moonshine north of North Bay. [*Exit.*] Git hikin', you hoboes. [*To dogs*] Mush there, you Dolly, Husky. Gee! [*Cracks whip.*

[*Starts to sing*—HANSEN *and* MCPHERSON *join in.*
Tune, 'Rings on my Fingers'.

Warts on me fingers. Corns on me toes.
Icicles in me whiskers, frostbites on me nose.
Put on yer snowshoes an' come along with me, to
PORCUPINE.

[JOE *returns to centre stage while* FAIRBURN *sits on log or boulder.*

FAIRBURN [*Quietly*]. Possibly the boys are right—I must be bushed—buying claims with my last cent—claims that I could have staked for nothing.

JOE [*Sadly*]. Sure. You crazee all right.

FAIRBURN. I can't afford to develop them—or record them for that matter, and it's a cinch I couldn't sell them even if I felt like it—but the boys banked on me, so I guess I did the right thing.

JOE. Dey forget you already. You go hungry dis winter an' dey not 'elp.

FAIRBURN. I'll go logging. [*He stands up and looks across space to south-west.*] I wonder if that old dyke means anything—Unless I find something else—where that outcropping leads to—I'll still be broke.

[*Sits down again.*

JOE. Do you look to de sout'—w'ere de rock she come right up above groun'?

FAIRBURN. Possibly it runs that way—but the dyke dips north-east—[*Meditates.*] And if I do find something I wonder if I'll be happier.

JOE. But why not?

FAIRBURN. Erland will come out here with drills, machinery, and gangs of men. They'll raise a head frame over the shaft—and we'll hear nothing but the roar of the stamp mills pounding out rock.

JOE. An' de smelter, she keel de tree, de bird an' she sen' de animal far away.

FAIRBURN. Yes! They'll make a shambles of it.

JOE. But you beat it queeck den. You have beeg cheque—lot of mon.

FAIRBURN. Yes, I'd have lots of money—but I'd lose my camp—my home—and then I'd wander around the towns like a hunted dog. [*Rises.*

JOE. We go soon—me, I pack t'ings up.

FAIRBURN. Yes—we'd better be on our way. [*Crosses to his pack.*] Hansen wished he had my faith and Sandy called me a damned fool—I think I'll call that rock Fairburn's folly—a monument to faith. (*He stoops to pick up pack—pauses.*] I wonder how deep a folly can go—or faith for that matter.

[*As* FAIRBURN *picks up pack he sees the small piece of rock. Almost mechanically he picks up and casually weighs it in his hand.*

JOE [*Solicitously, as he gathers pelts together*]. Don't you worry, George—you mak' beeg mon' some day.

[FAIRBURN *does not hear. He is looking at the rock in his hand. He is scraping the earth off it. A small white layer of quartz is disclosed and small dots of yellow surround it.*

FAIRBURN [*Looks at rock through small magnifying glass*]. Look Joe! I wonder where this came from.

JOE [*Who has not paid much attention*]. Some man she drop it maybe on way t'rough.

FAIRBURN. But it's rich ore, Joe. It's just what I'm looking for—copper-gold.

JOE [*Comes over to* FAIRBURN]. Oh! Dat! Why dat piece I peeck up dere—I use it for mend my trap.

[FAIRBURN *excitedly drops pack and goes to the boulder. He is on his hands and knees scraping away the earth. He gets a small hammer from his pack and chips off fresh pieces.*

JOE. You gone clean crazy, George. What you do?

FAIRBURN [*Standing up*]. Look! Joe. Look at this. [*Thrusts fresh pieces before* JOE.] It's free gold—a bonanza—and copper, too. [*Faces south-west toward the dyke and pulls out his compass*]. North-east south-west. [*Shouts.*] It must be—[*puts hands to mouth and calls off-stage.*] Pete! Sandy! Oscar! Come back! Come back! I've found the vein—the mother lode.

[He listens but there is no reply. He watches intently. Then a smile crosses his face. He glances down and in a moment is on his hands and knees scraping at the earth. JOE *looks at him with amazement.*

CURTAIN

MANITOU PORTAGE

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

By T. M. Morrow

CHARACTERS

Scotty
'Big Jack' O'Connors
Rivermen of the Present
A Lost Man
Two Hunters
Rivermen of the Past
The Boss Bully
The Manitou

T. M. MORROW has written several one-act plays, four of which have been produced. "The Lost Day", prize-winner in the contest held in 1923 by the Community Players of Winnipeg, was produced in Toronto in 1924. "Coincidence" won the Blanche MacIntosh Prize in the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire Contest in 1924. It was published in *Echoes* in June, 1924 and produced in Montreal, 1925. "The Hen", was presented in Montreal, 1929. "The Blue Pitcher", prize-winner in the contest conducted in 1926 by the Drama Group, Canadian Authors' Association, and printed in *One-Act Plays by Canadian Authors* (Montreal, 1926), was produced in Montreal in 1930.

Mr. Morrow is a civil engineer, living in Montreal. He has written short stories and poetry, but playwriting is his major interest.

"Manitou Portage" should be read and staged with a certain freedom of interpretation. "The thing should be considered as a sort of poem—by poem I mean something capable of instilling emotion." writes Mr. Morrow. "A play is not a play until it has been acted. What I value most, therefore, for my plays is production."

But while it presents difficulties in staging, "Manitou Portage" offers unique opportunities to the director. More than any other play in the volume, it lends itself to expressionistic production—the mobile play of light, rhythm, colour, and sound, combining with words and action to build an emotional crescendo of fear.

Although the author says that O'Connor's prototype is John L. Sullivan and not one of O'Neill's heroes, the play bears an interesting resemblance to "The Hairy Ape" and "The Emperor Jones" in the character of its central figure as well as in its semi-expressionistic style.

MANITOU PORTAGE

SCENE: *The Manitou Portage. The portage road leads downward on the hillside which, clad in white birches and evergreens, towers in the right background.*

In the foreground is a cleared space, into which the road turns. Along the back of the cleared space is ranged a row of rocks, forming the edge of the cliff overhanging the pool below.

Beyond the clearing and the hill shows the sky.

The road leads onward to the left; so that a person descending the road and continuing on downstream crosses the stage diagonally back to front, right to left.

At the left back is a birch tree, upon a bough of which a tin cup hangs, for the convenience of those who would drink from the spring at its base.

The sound of falling water, the continuous tumbling of the Falls of the Manitou into the pool, is heard throughout the action.

A good expanse of sky should be visible; and, if a glimpse of the waterfall can be given, it will add to the effect.

THE CURTAIN rises upon an empty stage.

It is sunset. The sky is flushed with red. This should deepen; then gradually fade until, at the point where O'CONNORS *is left alone, the night is at hand.*

Down the road come stumping the RIVERMEN. *They form a motley herd, clad in all manner of costumes; selections from department store catalogues, clothing from the company's commissary, cast-off military equip-*

ment, even last decade's Sunday suit with the trousers slashed off at the knees. Each man carries the peavy used in his day's work. They turn into the clearing, crowding about the spring, drinking deeply and eagerly from the cup which the firstcomer snatches from its place.

Last of all comes "BIG JACK" O'CONNORS. *He alone carries no peavy. He shoulders aside the others and, seizing the cup from the hand of the man about to drink, quenches his thirst, then throws the cup upon the ground, for its late possessor to pick up. The others draw away from him. He surveys them arrogantly.*

He is a powerfully built man of none too prepossessing appearance, filled with a cocksureness which is not altogether unadmirable. His swagger is not without the might wherewith to back it.

O'CONNORS. Scotty! [*A runt of a man separates himself from the crowd.*] Come here! [SCOTTY *approaches* O'CONNORS *rather doubtfully.*] All right; hurry up! I ain't goin' to eat yuh! [*He grasps* SCOTTY.] Now then, Scotty, what excuse 've yuh got for livin' anyhow?

SCOTTY. Nothin'. It's on'y a habit I got into.

O'CONNORS. Do yuh know any songs, Scotty?

SCOTTY. One 'r two. On'y I don't feel like singin'.

O'CONNORS [*Loosing his hold*]. Well, I don't feel so good myself.

SCOTTY. What's the matter?

O'CONNORS. Oh, I jus' feel rotten. Who wouldn't feel rotten lookin' after a bunch like them? [*He indicates the others.*] It mus' be three months pretty near since

I've been in any kind of a fight worth talkin' about. No wonder I feel rotten.

SCOTTY. We'll get into town nex' week. Maybe you'll feel better then.

O'CONNORS. I sure will! Say, wait till I get into town with a couple of bottles of hootch in me. I'll show them somethin'. I wonder if Joe Laframboise 's round there yet.

SCOTTY. He was las' time we come through.

O'CONNORS. Well, if he's there now, he'd best move. I've been savin' my strength a long time for a good scrap an' there ain't nobody I'd ruther have it with than Joe Laframboise. Say now, don't yuh think he'd make a beautiful corpse?

SCOTTY. He's a tough egg.

O'CONNORS. Yuh said it! But say, how about me? If Joe Laframboise is tough, where do I come in?

SCOTTY. Oh, you jus' kind of come in a class by yourself.

O'CONNORS. Yuh bet I do! Big Jack O'Connors; that's me! I'm boss of the gang an' boss of the whole river. Yes, an' when I'm in town, I'm boss there, too. I can lick 'em all, no matter how big they are 'r how tough they come. An' don't yuh forget it!

SCOTTY. I ain't likely to!

O'CONNORS. An' how about that song?

SCOTTY. I don't feel like singin'.

O'CONNORS [*Doubling up a fist and holding it beneath* SCOTTY'S *nose*]. Smell that! Jus' smell it, Scotty! My advice to yuh, Scotty, is to start singin' quick, without no more arguin'. I'm apt to hit pretty hefty when I'm

riled. [*To the others*] Come on, yuh bunch of bums! Line up there an' help Scotty out! He's goin' to sing.

[SCOTTY *sings 'The Foreman Young Monroe'* while the others join in on the last line of each verse, holding their peavies point upward and swinging them in unison with the metre; then slapping the butts upon the ground at the end of the verse.*

O'CONNORS. That was like somethin' yuh'd sing, Scotty. Don't yuh know nothin' more cheerful?

SCOTTY. I could sing somethin' else.

O'CONNORS. Well, don't! That was bad enough. I ain't takin' no more chances on your singin'. I felt rotten enough before but I feel somethin' awful now. I wish I could get into one real good fight, jus' for a change. [*To the others*] Heigh, yuh bunch of bums, any two of yuh want to fight with me? [*A pause*] Any three then? [*A pause*] Any four? 'r five? 'r six? The whole bunch then? Come on an' get the stuffin's knocked out of yuh! Nothin' doin', eh? All right, get ahead off down to yuhr supper! Maybe the cook'll have a nice bottle of milk apiece for yuh.

[*The others pass out of sight to left, down the portage road, leaving* O'CONNORS *and* SCOTTY *alone.*

O'CONNORS. Do yuh know, Scotty, I've got a mind to stop right here tonight?

SCOTTY. I wouldn't do that.

O'CONNORS. I know yuh wouldn't. Yuh 're like all the rest. Yuh 've heard the yarns they tell about this place an' yuh ain't takin' no chances.

SCOTTY. Well, I've been drivin' the river longer th'n most an' there ain't nobody stopped here in my time.

*Words and music are to be found on pp. 67 ff.

O'CONNORS. Maybe that's why folks 're scared. If somebody stopped here jus' once, it 'd show them there's nothin' here to be scared of. Anyhow, I'm goin' to try it. If nothin' happens, it jus' shows there ain't nothin'. If there's any fun, me for it! I'm out for mos' anything tonight. I never seen things 's slow 's they've been on this drive.

SCOTTY. I remember hearin' once, away back, before I come on the river, there was a couple of stout lads took it into their heads one night to stop here. On'y they didn't stop long. They was back in camp inside half-an-hour with the life scared out of them pretty near.

O'CONNORS. An' what'd they see?

SCOTTY. I don't mind hearin'. I guess they never knew. It was jus' somethin'. They say there's somethin' here. I heard once there was dead Indians buried somewheres round.

O'CONNORS [*Mockingly*]. Yes; an' pirates' treasure. They sure come a long way to bury it.

SCOTTY. I remember half-a-dozen 's been drowned right along here an' most of them 's planted round here somewheres. That is, them they found. There must 've been dozens drowned here, since they started drivin'. Lots of them they never found. They say, if you go over the falls, they never find you. You jus' go down in the pool an' that's the end of you.

O'CONNORS [*Glancing down over the cliff*]. What kind of fish 've they got down there anyhow?

SCOTTY. It ain't a fish. It's somethin' the Indians used to talk about. Manitou they called it; a sort of a god of some kind. Some folks say it's the Manitou scares you off, if you try to stop here.

O'CONNORS. Well; I ain't no heathen to be scared of nothin' like that.

SCOTTY. I remember once they found a man dead at the other end of the portage. He got lost round there, one year in black fly time. It was when they put the railway through an' he was workin' on it. On'y he got into a scrap with somebody an' stuck a knife into him. So he had to light out an', of course, he didn't darest go where anybody'd see him. They say he was somethin' awful when they found him. The woods ain't no place for a man don't know his way round, specially in black fly time.

O'CONNORS. Black flies don't bother me none.

SCOTTY. I guess there couldn't nothin' less than a shark take a bite off you.

O'CONNORS. Well, there ain't no one yet ever told me I ain't hardy; an' I sure never figured on supplyin' meals for no insec's.

SCOTTY. I remember, too, hearin' about a man that got shot here. His own brother, they said, done it, seein' him movin' an' takin' him for a deer. That was long back, on'y I mind hearin' about it.

O'CONNORS. Well, I guess nobody'll shoot me for a deer, not in the dark anyhow. I'm stickin' here. Maybe I'll have some fun. Say, even if the old Boss Bully hisself was to come along tonight, I bet I could beat him, the way I feel. An' I sure ain't runnin' from no heathen god. What 'd yuh call it?

SCOTTY. Manitou.

O'CONNORS. Manitou. I mus' remember that. Maybe I'll fight him, if nothin' else turns up. Anyhow, yuh can't scare me with yuhr yarns. Nex' thing I know

By permission of the National Gallery, Ottawa *By J. E. H. MacDonald*

Solemn Land

This austere and powerful canvas holds the mood of the Algoma wilderness, the scene of "Lake Doré". Through the silence of a virgin land of hills and forests, and under wide skies, the Montreal River flows toward Lake Superior. The canvas has the solemnity, the majesty, the "cathedral" feeling common in the north.

yuh 'll be tellin' me there's rabbits round here an' they'll come an' bite me. Say, if I kept on listenin' to yuh, I'd go daffy, if I even seen a moth flyin' round.

SCOTTY. It'll come pretty cold. It'll be lots warmer at the camp.

O'CONNORS. I said I'm stayin' an' I'm stayin'. Nothin' can scare me out of it. Not dead folks n'r nothin'. Manitou; that's what yuh call that heathen god, ain't it?

SCOTTY. Yes, Manitou.

O'CONNORS [*On edge of cliff*]. Hello, Manitou! Say, Manitou, listen! This is me, Big Jack O'Connors. An' yuh can't bluff me. I'm stoppin' here tonight, jus' to show yuh up. Come on now, Manitou, do yuhr damnedest!

SCOTTY. I wouldn't do that.

O'CONNORS. No, I bet yuh wouldn't, Scotty. Run along now 'r yuh'll be late for yuhr supper.

SCOTTY. How about your own supper? Hadn't you best run down for that?

O'CONNORS. I had a snack along in the afternoon an' I ain't hungry. On'y thing I'm real hungry for 's a good scrap of some sort. Do yuh know, Scotty, I think yuh're real nervouse about my stoppin' here?

SCOTTY. It's takin' a big chance.

O'CONNORS. Run along! Run along! Yuh'll have me sore in a minute. An' yuh know what that means, Scotty.

SCOTTY [*Moving toward left*]. I'll leave you my peavy, anyhow, so you'll have somethin' to lay your hand on in case of trouble.

O'CONNORS. I've got my fists, ain't I?

SCOTTY. It might come in handy.

O'CONNORS. Ah, leave it, if yuh want to!

SCOTTY. Well, so long.[*He lays the peavy on the ground, left.*] Good luck. I'll maybe come firs' thing in the mornin' to see how you make out.

O'CONNORS. Don't lose any sleep on my account.

SCOTTY. You're takin' a big chance.

O'CONNORS. Ah; get along 'r I'll take a swing at yuh, jus' for practice. [SCOTTY *goes out, left.*

[*Night has come on. The first stars are in the sky.* O'CONNORS *looks down into the pool for a few seconds; then moves toward center.*

O'CONNORS. I should 've brung an axe. It might come pretty cold, jus' like Scotty said. Can't get much drywood without an axe; on'y I might find somethin' 'll burn.

[*He searches for firewood, wandering part way up the road, then back to the clearing, garnering a bit here and there. He places his material somewhat to the back and right of center; then searches for more along the top of the cliff. He pauses and stands, listening to the river.*

O'CONNORS. The river rattlin' along like that might get some folks. It won't get me, though; not me, I ain't that kind. [*He laughs boisterously and looks down at the pool.*] Heigh, Manitou, wake up! It's night; an' I'm here; an' nothin' 's happened. 'S far 's I c'n see, nothin' 's goin' to happen.

[*Halfway up the road, as though some animal were skulking in the underbrush, appear a pair of eyes, glowing in the darkness. They disappear; then re-appear farther down the road.* O'CONNORS

spies them. He stands watching. Slowly the eyes move down the path. O'CONNORS *seizes the peavy and brandishes it.*

O'CONNORS. Scat! Scat! [*The eyes remain fixed in one spot.* O'CONNORS *moves right.*] Scat! Beat it! Shoo!

[*The eyes disappear; then re-appear farther up the road.* O'CONNORS, *brandishing his weapon, follows. The eyes move up the road, appearing and disappearing until they have passed from sight.* O'CONNORS, *glancing furtively behind him, returns to the clearing, laying the peavy down in its previous resting-place.*

O'CONNORS. It ain't nothin', I guess. On'y a fox, mos' likely. If I made a fire, it'd keep 'em off.

[*It is darker. All the stars are out.* O'CONNORS *goes to where he had piled his firewood. He strikes a match. It flares up; then goes out. As he is striking a second match, there comes stealthily down the road a* HUNTER, *rifle in in hand. The match dies out, as* O'CONNORS *watches. The* HUNTER *enters the clearing. Suddenly, as he nears center, he staggers; then falls forward. He raises himself; falls again; raises himself sufficiently to crawl toward the spring. Slowly he drags himself toward the water. With an effort, he pulls the cup from the branch and reaches toward the spring. The cup drops from his hand. A last paroxysm shakes his body. He lies still.* O'CONNORS *moves nearer to the fallen man. A* SECOND HUNTER *enters left. He kneels beside the dead man and raises his head. Grasping the cup, he fills it; then splashes water upon the dead man's face.*

He lifts the body and rifle of the dead man and bears them off, up the portage road. O'CONNORS *crosses to right and looks after the pair. He retreats to centre, glancing about him.*

O'CONNORS. There's spooks here all right. Scotty was right enough about that. Well, they don't scare me none. Spooks never hurt nobody.

[*From the back comes fluttering a* MOTH, *a pale night flyer. It flits before* O'CONNORS; *then to extreme right; then back again.* O'CONNORS *watches it. The* MOTH *goes to extreme left; then comes drifting back.* O'CONNORS *makes a vicious swing at it. The* MOTH *retreats to left.* O'CONNORS *follows a step or two. The* MOTH *returns, evading another swing, then off to right.* O'CONNORS *pursues it.* MOTH *goes left. It is joined by another; then another, until there are half-a-dozen moths flitting about, pursued by* O'CONNORS, *who strikes at them wildly. Suddenly all the* MOTHS *flutter off and disappear, leaving* O'CONNORS *standing at centre.*

O'CONNORS. Moths. On'y moths. I mus' be gettin' dippy, chasin' moths like that. [*He laughs.*] Wait till I see Scotty, I'll tell him. I'll tell him he got me dippy, tellin' me all them yarns.

[*The* LOST MAN *totters in from the left. He is on the last stretch toward complete exhaustion. His clothing is in tatters. One boot is gone; the bare foot is tied about with a fragment of rag. He has no headgear. His face, fringed about with a fortnight's growth of beard, is swollen until he is sightless. He staggers about the clearing, his hands now feeling ahead for obstructions*

or guidance, now clutching feebly above his head as though to ward off a horde of worrying insects. He turns back to left; stumbles and falls, raises himself; then to right and staggers toward the road. Stumbling, groping, clutching at his imaginary tormentors, he slowly ascends the road until he is lost to sight.

O'CONNORS. God! Scotty was right. The black flies sure made a mess of that guy. Well, they never bothered me none an' they ain't goin' to start now. On'y I wish there was some noise; an owl 'r somethin'. There ain't nothin' on'y that damn river. Maybe, if I lit the fire it'd be better. No, I guess I'd best save it. It ain't cold yet, not like it'll be toward mornin'. I should 've brung an' axe, then I'd 've got plenty of drywood.

[*He draws a plug of tobacco from a hip pocket and bites off a chunk of it. The delicacy seems to to give him renewed courage. He goes to edge of cliff and looks down.*

O'CONNORS. Come on, Manitou, show yuhr stuff! Let's see what else yuh got to scare folks.

[*Across the sky go wavering the shifting, ghostly streamers of the Aurora Borealis.* O'CONNORS *moves to right next the audience and stands watching.*

O'CONNORS. The lights! The Northern Lights! I never seen them so clear before. Well, that ain't nothin'. Yuh see them anywheres. On'y here they're spooky, too, wavin' an' twistin' 's if they was a sign of some sort. Looks like all the spooks in the werld was wavin' to each other. Well, let 'em come! Come on, spooks, come on! Let's see yuh! Sooner yuh come, sooner we'll have it over with.

[*Down the portage road come silently the* RIVERMEN OF A LONG DEAD DAY, *the drive of fifty years back. Their moccasins, red shirts, toques, leggings, etc., are natural color; their faces are the blanched visages of the dead. They move slowly, mechanically, like men who have reached the end of a long day's journey, passing down the road and across to make their exit at left. Their number must depend upon the size of stage and actors available. A spectral canoe, borne upon the shoulders of weary men, would be effective, if space permits. A pair of portagers carrying equipment supported by a tump-line could be included, if desired.*

O'CONNORS [*As they pass*]. The drive! The old drive! An' all of them dead. [*He backs off to extreme right, until they have passed*]. Whew; they sure give me the creeps. I wish I had a drop of somethin' to warm me. [*He shivers. His teeth chatter, as he moves toward the place where his firewood is laid. He feels with trembling fingers for matches. He drops most of what he draws from his pockets but he manages to strike one. It flares up. His hand trembles so that he drops it. He strikes another, with no better success*]. Ah, it ain't cold. It's on'y a chill I got.

[*He paces back and forth, beating his arms across his breast, as though to warm himself. He feels for his plug of tobacco. He draws it forth. His courage revives. He goes to the edge of the cliff and, discarding the contents of his mouth into the pool, takes a fresh bite.*

O'CONNORS. Heigh there, Manitou, is that all yuh got? spooks? Nothin' but spooks, eh? Well, they don't

scare me none. It takes more than spooks to scare Big Jack O'Connors. That was a good show jus' now; but I can stand it. Say, ain't yuh got no live ones? Look round an' see if yuh ain't. If yuh have, send 'em along. Wake up an' send somethin' jus' for once I can scrap with. See if yuh can't find somethin' somewheres I can sink my fists into!

[*It is darker. Clouds drift across the sky. Down the portage road comes stalking the* BOSS BULLY, *a huge man of most forbidding aspect, the terror of the river in days long past, a picturesque yet ominous figure.* O'CONNORS *does not become aware of his presence, until he reaches the clearing. The* BOSS BULLY *halts and stands, scowling at* O'CONNORS.

O'CONNORS [*Excitedly*]. The Boss Bully! The old Boss Bully hisself! Come on, then! Come on, yuh big stiff! I c'n beat yuh the same's any one else. Come on an' get the stuffin's knocked out of yuh! Won't come, eh? On'y stand there an' look nasty? I'll fix yuh!

[*He charges at the* BOSS BULLY, *who sets himself for the onslaught, hurling* O'CONNORS *back, so that he falls heavily. The* BOSS BULLY *moves a step toward* O'CONNORS, *who rises slowly and backs off to left.* BOSS BULLY *halts.*

O'CONNORS. Yuh big stiff! Say, do yuh know who I am? I'm O'Connors, Big Jack O'Connors. Big Jack O'Connors; that's me! I'm boss of the gang an' boss of the river. I c'n beat 'em all, no matter how big they come. I c'n beat yuh, too, the same as the others. Watch out! I'm comin'!

[*He charges. The* BOSS BULLY *stands immovable, merely opening his arms and grasping* O'CONNORS *in a rib-crushing hug. They wrestle.* BOSS BULLY *hurls* O'CONNORS *once more to the ground. On hands and knees, the fallen man crawls toward the cliff. He raises himself painfully. He faces the* BOSS BULLY, *staggering as he does so. He draws a sleeve across his face, as though to clear his eyesight.*

O'CONNORS. Think yuh can lick me, eh? Well, yuh got another think comin'. There ain't nothin' c'n lick me. I'm boss, I tell yuh! I'm boss of the gang an' boss of the whole river; yes, an' I'm boss here, too.

[*He moves unsteadily toward the* BOSS BULLY. *They come to grips. The* BOSS BULLY *throws* O'CONNORS *once more heavily.* O'CONNORS *lies still.* BOSS BULLY *moves to left. He halts.* O'CONNORS *stirs. He raises himself a little. He crawls toward the* BOSS BULLY. *With a great effort, he raises himself and totters toward his foe, who, with a gesture of disdain, turns and stalks off, to left.* O'CONNORS, *reeling and spent, follows until he, too, has passed from sight. For a matter of ten seconds, the stage is empty. The clouds have crossed the sky. The stars are very clear.* O'CONNORS *stumbles in from the left. He falls. He raises himself sufficiently to crawl to where the peavy lies. With its aid he raises himself and stands leaning upon it, blood-stained and dying.*

O'CONNORS. He's gone. The Boss Bully's gone. It was him all right. Sure, it was him. I'd know him

anywheres. The old Boss Bully hisself. [*More confidently*] I licked him. Sure, I licked him. I driv him off. Sure, I driv him off. He run from me. He knew who I was. I'd 've knocked the stuffin's out of him, if he hadn't. [*Using the peavy as a staff, he moves toward the cliff.*] Heigh there, Manitou, yuh can't bluff me! Yuh sent 'em all, all kind of spooks an' ev'rythin'. The old Boss Bully hisself come an' he run from me. I'd 've knocked the stuffin's out of him, if he hadn't. Come on, Manitou, I'm callin' yuhr bluff. What else yuh got to send? Nothin', eh? Huh; nothin' else to scare me with? Come on yuhrself, then! Come on, I'll fight yuh! Tonight I c'n lick anything! Tonight—

[*He totters and falls. The face of the* MANITOU *rises and looks at the man before it, as it might regard an annoying insect. It is a stern face, leonine and massive, imperturbable as a statue carved from the primordial granite.* O'CONNORS *stirs. A pair of gigantic hands appear, resting on the edge of the cliff, one on either side of the fallen man. The head of the* MANITOU *rises a little higher and comes closer to* O'CONNORS. *Slowly, painfully,* O'CONNORS *raises himself. With a supreme effort, he lifts the peavy and stands, wide-legged, prepared to resist the expected onslaught. As though satisfied that the being before it is harmless; the head of the* MANITOU *is lowered and the hands withdrawn. The head sinks from sight.* O'CONNORS *turns and staggers to center. He stands, supported by the peavy.*

O'CONNORS. I licked him! I driv him off! I beat him! The heathen god—I beat him! I c'n lick 'em all! I c'n lick 'em all! I c'n—

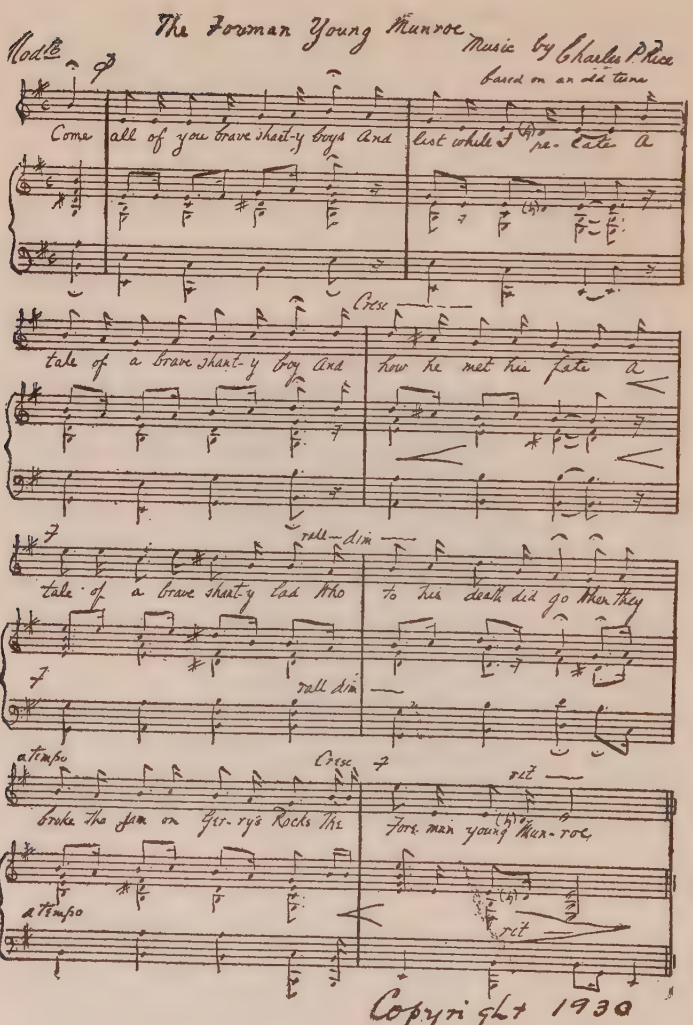
[*He drops the peavy. He falls heavily. He lies still. After a short pause,* THE CURTAIN *falls.*

THE FOREMAN YOUNG MONROE

The words of this old lumberjack ballad were compiled by the author from several sources. Versions are found in collections of folk songs from Canada to Texas. It seems to have originated in New England or Eastern Canada.

There is apparently no single recognized melody for the ballad. Most of the singers have improvised their own tunes. The author knows of one version sung in Northern Quebec, while Miss Helen Creighton heard another sung in two localities in Nova Scotia. Miss Creighton has taken down this melody (as sung by Mr. Earnest Neiforth, South-East Passage, Nova Scotia) and it is printed here for the first time. A number of other ballads collected by Miss Creighton in Nova Scotia are being published this fall, edited by Dr. Healey Willan of Toronto.

The music composed by Mr. Charles P. Rice, of Montreal, is based on an old tune. While not so authentic as Miss Creighton's, it is perhaps closer to the spirit of the play. It has something of the sadness often found in folk music.


The Foreman Young Munroe
Music by Charles P. Rice
based on an old tune
Come all of you brave shant-y boys And list while I re-late a
Cresc
tale of a brave shant-y boy And how he met his fate a
rall-dim
tale of a brave shant-y lad Who to his death did go When they
rall dim
a tempo
Cresc
rit
broke the jam on Ger-ry's Rocks The Fore-man young Mun-roe
a tempo
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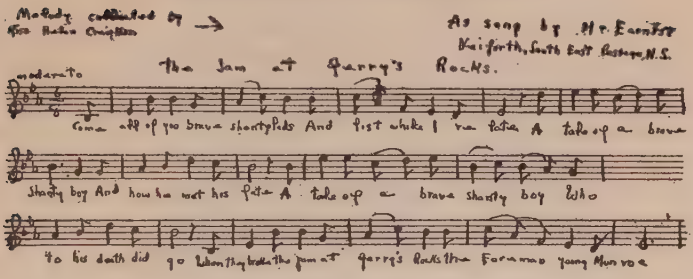
Melody collected by
Miss Helen Creighton
As sung by Mr. Lawrence
Blairforth, South East Passage, N.S.
moderato
The Jam at Gerry's Rocks.
Come all of you brave shantyboys And list while I re late A tale of a brave
shanty boy And how he met his fate A tale of a brave shanty boy Who
to his death did go When they broke the jam at Gerry's Rocks the Foreman young Monroe

THE FOREMAN YOUNG MONROE

Come all of you brave shanty boys
And list what I relate
Concerning a young shanty boy
And his untimely fate;
Concerning a young riverman,
Who to his death did go;
When they broke the jam at Gerry's Rocks:
The Foreman Young Monroe.

'Twas on a Sunday morning,
As shortly you shall hear.
Our logs were piled up mountain high.
We could not keep them clear.
Our foreman said, "Come on, brave boys,
Follow me where I go.
We'll break the jam at Gerry's Rocks,"
Said the Foreman Young Monroe.

Now, some of them were willing;
While others they were not;
For to do work on Sunday
They did not think they ought.
But six of our brave shanty boys,
They volunteered to go
To break the jam at Gerry's Rocks
With the Foreman Young Monroe.

They had not rolled off many logs
Till they heard his clear voice say,
"I'd have you boys be on your guard
For the jam will soon give way."
These words he'd scarcely spoken
When the jam did give and go,
Taking with it those six brave boys
And the Foreman Young Monroe.

Now, when those other shanty boys
This sad news came to hear,
In search of their dead comrades
To the river they did steer.
Six of the mangled bodies
Afloating down did go;
While crushed and bleeding near the bank
Lay the Foreman Young Monroe.

They buried him quite decently
There at the end of day.
Come all of you brave shanty boys
And for your leader pray.
Engraved upon a hemlock tree
That on the bank did grow
Is the age and date and the sad fate
Of the Foreman Young Monroe.

There was one fair girl among the rest,
A maid from Pembroke town.
Her moans and cries did rend the skies
When her true love lay drowned.
Before three months had passed away,
She too was called to go.
Her last request was, 'Let me rest
By the side of Young Monroe.'

LAKE DORÉ

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

By J. E. Middleton

CHARACTERS

Stella Kirkman
Luke Parsons, *her brother*
Lawrence, *an aviator*

Lake Doré was produced for the first time by Herman A. Voaden at the Central High School of Commerce, Toronto, on April 9, 1930.

JESSE EDGAR MIDDLETON, journalist and author, was born in Wellington County, Ontario. After teaching Public School, he served a Cleveland publishing house as proofreader and copyist of French and Latin manuscripts relating to Canadian history, and later entered newspaper work on the *Quebec Chronicle*. He came to *The Toronto Mail and Empire* in 1903 as Music Critic, joined *The Toronto News* in the following year, and served successively as Music and Drama Critic, editorial writer, and paragrapher. In 1918 he published a volume of war-verse under the title of "Sea Dogs and Men-at-Arms", (Putnam). His other writings include a History of Toronto, a History of the Province of Ontario, a volume (in the press) entitled "The Romance of Ontario", and a variety of contributions to Canadian and American magazines. For twenty-five years he has been Choirmaster of Centennial United Church, Toronto. Mr. Middleton's hobby is dramatic literature. His plays, "The Velvet Muzzle", "Loot", and "Royal Doulton" have been produced at Hart House Theatre. During the summer of 1930 three of his ballad operas, "Young Peggy", "Maureen", and "The Ayrshire Ploughman", were produced and broadcast by the Canadian Pacific Railway from their Banff Springs Hotel. Mr. Middleton is an Ex-President of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto.

While his other contributions to the theatre have been chiefly historical in character, in "Lake Doré" Mr. Middleton has attempted a strong realistic drama of the present day. It should be pointed out that although the play opens and closes with an exterior setting, and gives in its dialogue a general impression of the open North country, its action transpires in an interior setting.

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Photo by Allan Sangster

Lake Doré—I

A scene from the first production. Left alone in the cabin in the final moments of the play, Stella Kirkman, her ideal shattered, passes slowly through the open door into the bitter cold to her death.

LAKE DORÉ

The curtain rises in darkness. Blue lights and white come on gradually, one-third, one-half, full, revealing a drop, painted from FRANZ JOHNSTON'S *picture, "The Deserted Cabin".*

The increasing noise of an aeroplane is heard. Suddenly it gets louder and suddenly stops. In the silence the lights fade out.

LIGHTS UP

SCENE: *Interior of a log cabin in Algoma. On the right at front is a rough cupboard with doors. Behind, running upstage along the wall are bunks two storeys high. On the left side at front is a door leading to the woodshed. At left centre is a stone fireplace and chimney, with a stove-pipe hole seven feet above the floor. At the rear side of the fireplace stands a rusty box-stove with no stovepipes. They are standing out of sight, in the corner behind the chimney. In the rear wall, towards the left, is a door leading outside; towards the right is a window with a cotton curtain. Between the door and the window a half dozen hooks hold a variegated winter wardrobe. In the middle of the room is a table roughly set for breakfast, with tin plates and cups. Chairs are at right and rear. At left is a soap-box doing chair-duty.*

On rise, STELLA, *a dark-eyed woman of thirty, with weary gestures and never a smile, is cooking bacon at the fireplace. She has a mackinaw over her black frock, and wears woollen socks over her black shoes and stockings.*

LUKE *gets out of the lower bunk at right front. He is in trousers, socks, and undershirt, and puts on angrily a flannel shirt, a sweater, a mackinaw, extra socks, and shoepacks. He is a dark, shock-headed man of 35, low-browed, thin-lipped, and with a scar over his eye. His voice is rough and his disposition snarling.*

STELLA. You took your time about getting up. It's half past nine. After bacon is heated three or four times it gets tough.

LUKE. Why should I get up? There ain't nothin' to do.

STELLA. If you don't get that hardwood into the shed we'll freeze to death. The cabin gets colder every day. I suppose the wood-pile is buried in snow this morning.

LUKE. There's enough in the shed now to keep us goin'.

STELLA. Only spruce. It burns away in no time. Won't you get some in this morning, Luke? Please!

LUKE. You can get that fresh flyin' man to do it for you. Where is he?

STELLA. Digging out a runway, I suppose.

LUKE. Don't you know?

STELLA. He said last night that he would have to do it. He was up an hour before me. Built the fire and made coffee for himself.

LUKE. He's got his nerve with him; makin' free with our grub.

STELLA. It's his own coffee; condensed stuff. He says that all the flyers carry it.

LUKE. 'Tain't his pork or his flour.

STELLA. We were eating his chocolate. It's as broad

as it is long. Two or three days' stuff is neither here nor there.

LUKE. Two or three days? How is he goin' to get out in two or three days? His machine is busted.

STELLA. He'll fix it. And he has plenty of gas.

LUKE. I'll says he has. He's full of it. [*Goes to the window.*] Holy cats! The window's nearly covered. Must ha' snowed all night.

STELLA. It blew hard too. I didn't sleep over two hours.

LUKE. You think too darn much. That's what's the matter with you.

STELLA [*Bitterly*]. Do you wonder? God knows I have enough to think about.

LUKE. You needn't go over it again every night. That don't help none. If you keep on you'll be in the booby-hatch. Your man is gone and that's all there is to it. [*Goes to the door.*] Lawrence must have had trouble gettin' the door open. Six feet high, that drift. [*Comes to table and sits down to his breakfast eating like a wolf.*] There must be three feet of snow on the level—and in November. [*Growls and shakes his head in disgust.*] The guy that built this shack might ha' swung the door the other way. Should ha' had sense enough to remember that it snows up here.

STELLA. Luke Parsons, never you mind the guy that built it. Jake built it.

LUKE. How do you know?

STELLA. He told me that he had some stuff up here to look after, and was putting up a shack.

LUKE. What kind of stuff?

STELLA. I suppose his mining claim. He was prospecting then.

LUKE. Pity he didn't keep on prospectin', and live decent.

STELLA. He was a better man than you are. There wasn't a lazy bone in his body. He was always busy at something.

LUKE. Yep. He was busy all right. Eighteen months with hard labor gave him a great chance.

STELLA. You beast.

LUKE. Why didn't he stay prospectin', I say? Why did he get into Pete McAra's gang? He might ha' knowed he'd get into trouble. A lot o' roughnecks!

STELLA. He wasn't in the gang; running a boat across the river is no crime!

LUKE. It ain't, eh? When he's helpin' to smuggle dope one way and Chinks the other? You make me sick.

STELLA. He didn't do it, I tell you. It was the others. He wouldn't do those things; then the gang lied him into prison, and then——

LUKE. And shot him when he came out, heh? Why? Because he couldn't run straight even with crooks. They made a good job of it too.

[STELLA *lifts her hands in a gesture of grief and despair.*

STELLA. Oh! oh!

LUKE. He was never mixed up in no Bank robbery, I s'pose?

STELLA. What do you mean?

LUKE. Down to the Soo. The big robbery; four years ago at the Commercial Bank. Everybody says that he had a finger in it; mebbe a whole arm.

STELLA. It's a lie. It's a lie. He wasn't at the Soo. He was in Toronto with me.

LUKE. Only part of the time. He came up with a mining crowd and stayed. You came in September just after it was pulled off. A smart robbery. They got away clean with sixty thousand—Company pay-rolls and new notes and a Mint consignment. You remember it all right. Yep; your jailbird was a fine worker. You bet he was.

STELLA [*Intensely*]. You were always a brute, Luke Parsons, even when we were kids together at home. Kicking me, slapping me, pulling my hair, lying about me so that I would be whipped. How I hated you, my own brother. But never as I hate you now.

[*She takes up a knife from the table.*

LUKE [*Seizing her wrist*]. Have you gone crazy? By God, I believe you have.

[*He twists her wrist until she drops the knife.*

STELLA. Maybe. I have had trouble enough. No sleep; no sleep. And seeing him always, always, lying on the doorstep bleeding. And your beastly talk.

LUKE. You silly fool. Can't you take a joke?

STELLA. A joke! My God!

[*She sinks into a chair, in a storm of weeping.*

LUKE [*Walking to and fro*]. Do you wonder if I'm sore? Draggin' me up here to find the gold mine he left you. He even had to do that secret-like. Couldn't make no will. Just leaves a scrap o' paper. I knowed it was too late for a long canoe trip but you had to pester me into it. Goin' to be back in two weeks, hey? Afore the black frost came. Two weeks? It will be five months afore we're out o' here. And we'll need all the grub we've got.

You and your gold mines! There's rock here, a million tons o' rock; an' spruce trees, an' hills like the side of a house, an' porkypines, an' skunks. But all the gold hereabouts you could put in your eye. You were played for a sucker. So was I. Now we've got to pay for our foolishness; hangin' around here all winter. And a fool flyer droppin' in on us to put us on half-rations. Gold mines! Pah!

STELLA. Jake said there was gold here and he never lied to me; not once in ten years. He was the straightest man that ever walked.

LUKE. The Bankers don't think so.

STELLA [*In a menacing tone*]. Luke!

[LUKE *is impressed by the blaze in her eyes, and continues in milder tone.*

LUKE. We couldn't find no stakes in the first week. And after the snow came our chances were gone. If we only could get out of here—and come back in the Spring.

STELLA. Couldn't we walk to the railroad?

LUKE. Forty miles through a spruce bush—in a rough country—no trail—no snowshoes? Go soak your head.

STELLA. We could go by the river—on the ice.

LUKE. That's fifty mile. Wallerin' in three feet o' snow? Look-a-here, Stella. That cabin door faces the North. There ain't nothin' between it an' the North Pole. I'd just as soon walk out o' that door an' keep straight on as try to walk to the railroad. One is as easy as the other. Blowin' out your brains is a quicker way.

STELLA. We might make skis. Mr. Lawrence made one for his plane—with nothing but an axe and a crooked sapling. He was going to put it on last night.

LUKE. What good will it do him? A wing was twisted when he came down.

STELLA. He'll straighten it; and he'll get away. He's not a quitter, like you.

LUKE. We'll see. Has he said yet where he was bound when he crashed?

STELLA. Timmins. He's with the Swiftwater Mining Company, and was going up from the Soo.

LUKE. Don't believe it. He's too far north, unless he was mappin' the country. And he wouldn't do that without an observer, and in winter.

STELLA. He said that he lost his bearings in the storm.

LUKE. A likely story. Here he comes now.

[STELLA *goes to the window.*

[*Enter Rear,* LAWRENCE. *He is a sturdy, tall young man, with ruddy, clean-shaven face, and clad in a fur-trimmed buckskin coat and breeches, with moccasins. He wears a leather aviator's-cap with goggles shoved to the top of it, and heavy leather gauntlets. He is pleasant in manner, courteous, and quick of speech.*

LAWRENCE. Good morning, ma'am. [*To* LUKE] How do you do? There surely was a lot of feather beds emptied last night. That old stump out front has twenty-seven inches fresh on it; looks like a mushroom. [*Goes to the fireplace to warm his hands.*] It's going to be clear today, and cold too. There is a pale, yellow cloudpatch in the north over the spruces on the hill; that's a sign of twenty below.

STELLA [*In a far-away voice*]. It's beautiful. I saw it. It looks like the streets of Heaven—the golden streets of Heaven.

LUKE. And colder than Hell.

LAWRENCE. About half-way between, I guess. Anything in this world that looks like Heaven has a catch in it somewhere.

STELLA [*Coming to the table*]. Sit in, Mr. Lawrence. You need your breakfast, I'll warm up the bacon.

LAWRENCE. Thank you. [*He sits on the soap-box.*] I feel kind of hollow. Shovelling snow is a great thing for the appetite.

STELLA [*Crossing to the fireplace*]. Take that chair, Mr. Lawrence. It is more comfortable. It is not much of a table, for a guest.

LAWRENCE. Thank you. It's fine.

STELLA. Did you get your runway clear?

LAWRENCE. I guess I could start, but by rights I ought to do about a quarter of a mile more.

LUKE. Good Lord.

LAWRENCE. Along about three o'clock I shall be all set. I'll be in the Soo before dark.

LUKE. I thought your wing was twisted.

LAWRENCE. A couple of struts were bent. Of course they are not perfect, but I can manage all right. The start is the main thing, and I got the new ski fastened last night. Once I get up there will be no trouble.

LUKE. Could you take a couple of passengers?

LAWRENCE. In a two-seater Moth; with a bum wing? I'm afraid not, Mr. Parsons. I might take your wife, at a pinch, but it would be a cold trip. I thought you were here for the winter. Aren't you a trapper?

LUKE. She's not my wife; she's my sister, Mrs. Kirkman. Her and I came up on a canoe trip and got froze in.

LAWRENCE. Rather late for that kind of sport wasn't it?

STELLA. The frost came earlier than usual, and the snow too.

LAWRENCE. By Jove, that's hard luck. I'm afraid I am cutting in on your supplies. I'm sorry.

STELLA. Don't think of it. We have plenty. Will you have another slice of bacon?

LAWRENCE. No, thank you. A little of the gravy on this bread will be enough. And a cup of coffee.

LUKE. My sister says you're with a Minin' Company.

LAWRENCE. Yes; the Swiftwater people.

LUKE. Can they keep you busy? What do you do?

LAWRENCE. Oh, map the country. I am a kind of prospector. I explore a promising bit where there's a slip in the strata, or a fold. A fault, you know. That's what the geologists call it, and that's where the stuff is likely to be. We take out samples for assay; run down to the Bank with shipments for the Mint; bring back the pay for the men; bring in engineers or capitalists to look at new locations—oh, there's plenty to do.

LUKE. Then you know the Minin' game?

LAWRENCE. A little bit. Nobody really knows it.

LUKE. What do you think of the country around here?

LAWRENCE. Here? On the shores of Lake Doré?

LUKE Sure.

LAWRENCE. It's fine. Some day it will be a great holiday country—summer visitors, you know. It will grow prize cabbages and garden truck for a mile back of the lake. These old bottoms are fertile.

LUKE. No minin' here, I s'pose?

LAWRENCE. Oh, no.

STELLA. But back of us; in the hills?

LAWRENCE. It's pretty regular, ma'am; mostly hornblende and mica schist.

STELLA. What's that?

LAWRENCE. Kinds of rock. There's some late limestone too, and marble. I was a bit north of here last Spring with a geologist; at the other end of the Lake.

STELLA. No gold?

LAWRENCE. I wouldn't expect any, ma'am.

LUKE [*To Stella*]. What did I tell you? [*Pause.*

STELLA. My husband found gold here. He built this shack about four years ago. He—he was killed last summer—in an accident.

LUKE [*To* LAWRENCE]. He must ha' been stringin' her. Ain't enough gold in this district to fill a tooth.

LAWRENCE. What was your husband's name? Maybe I know him.

STELLA. Jacob Kirkman.

LAWRENCE. I've heard the name somewhere. Is the claim registered at the Mining Office?

STELLA. I don't know.

LAWRENCE. Did you find the stakes?

STELLA. No. We were here only a week when the snow came.

LAWRENCE. You ought to see them better in the snow, if it's not too deep.

LUKE. If there are any.

STELLA. My husband said that there was gold here. He had to go away for a while, but he was a straight man. He could tell the truth, and he could work.

LUKE. Huh! Work! Runnin' booze and Chinks across the river! [STELLA *looks threateningly at* LUKE.

LAWRENCE. I am afraid, Mrs. Kirkman, that you will have no success unless you get the record of the claim. Let me run you down to the Soo. A few minutes in the Mining Office would give you something to go on. You would need to wrap up well, but it might be worth while to shiver for a half hour or so. I could bring you back tomorrow.

STELLA. Oh—I never was in a plane. And you say the wing isn't right.

LAWRENCE. Come over to the runway and see the machine.

STELLA. You think it's safe? [*Dully*] Not that it makes any difference.

LAWRENCE. Of course it's safe. And the weather is perfect. Not a breath of wind. Come out and see for yourself.

STELLA. Go on ahead, and I'll join you.

LAWRENCE. Very well. [*Exit* LAWRENCE *rear.*

LUKE. That's a fool notion. Who would get my meals and keep the fire going?

STELLA. You would. Strange you hadn't thought of that. [STELLA *puts on goloshes and a fur coat.*] Perhaps if you have to cook you will put up those stovepipes. Jake said to put them up. Even a box stove is handier than a fireplace. You might do it for yourself. You won't do it for me.

LUKE. Think you're fresh, don't you?

STELLA. I think you're stale; and not from overwork.

LUKE. You can't go.

STELLA. Who will stop me? It's my business, and if I feel like going, Mr. Lawrence will take me.

LUKE. He thought he had heard of Kirkman, hey? I'll bet he has.

STELLA. Listen, you lazy hulk. Don't you say another word against Jake before him, or before me. I won't stand it.

LUKE. You won't stand it, hey? What will you do about it?

STELLA [*Intensely*]. Will you never learn? I tell you to look to yourself. There's a limit. Don't you cross it.

LUKE. You talk like a crazy woman.

STELLA. Mind I don't act like one. [LUKE *turns his back on her. She tries to reach the gun hung over the door, but cannot. Then she opens the door. Looking out, she stands as if fascinated.*] The streets of Heaven! The streets of Heaven!

LUKE. You're lettin' in a multitude of cold there. Shut that door. [*Exit* STELLA, *Rear.*

LUKE, *shivering, and very sulky, goes first to the fireplace and stirs the fire with a poker. Then he goes behind the fireplace and emerges with some lengths of stovepipe. He puts them together, laying them on the hearth and growling at them from time to time. Then he kicks aside the soap box, and drags the table to the fireplace. Mounting it, with the pipes, he puts one end on the stove, and is about to put the other end in the stovepipe hole, when he finds in it a bundle and a little canvas bag. He looks at them in surprise, then throws them back on the table. The jingle of the bag wakes his interest. Hastily he shoves the pipe into the hole, leaps to the floor, and starts feverishly to untie the bag.*

Two or three dozen gold coins are emptied on the table.

Money, money! Gold! By the Lord, that's what he meant.

[*He tears the paper off the bundle, throws it behind the stove, and finds in his hands a package of new bank notes, four inches thick. He strips off the rubber bands at one end, and flips through the notes.*

Holy Mackinaw! Fifties, and hundreds, and hundreds! I'm rich, rich, rich!

[*He begins to count the notes but he is awkward about it and realizes that he cannot spare the time. He goes to the window, but can see nothing; then he opens the door and peers out. Seeing no one coming, he is less hurried when he returns to the table, but he feels the importance of concealing the money. There is too much to hide on his person. He ties up the gold carefully, and puts the bag first in one pocket and then in another; but it is too heavy and the bulge is noticeable. Finally he disposes of it in a hip-pocket, tightens his belt, and pulls down his mackinaw. Then he makes two packages of the notes, using the rubber bands already around them. He stands irresolute, not knowing where to put them. Finally he wraps them in an old red blanket which is hanging out of the rear upper bunk, right rear. As he turns away an idea strikes him.*

Commercial Bank notes. By thunder, it's true. He was a crook; a blasted crook. That's the best darn thing.

[*Laughs loudly. He goes again to the door and peers out; then with a cheerful enthusiasm which transforms him, he shoves the table to its place, brushes the soot off it, and replaces the soap-box to left of it. Then he goes off at left front and immediately re-enters with an armful of short wood which he puts down beside the stove. Again he goes out, and returns with a round spruce log for the fireplace. Going out a third time he comes back with a snow-shovel. Now he puts on a hunting coat, a cap and mitts; and is about to go out at rear with the shovel, when he hears a noise outside. He goes right towards the window. Enter* STELLA *followed by* LAWRENCE.

LUKE. I was just goin' out to get our woodpile uncovered. I was lookin' out a few minutes ago and it's buried. The drift goes clear to the roof. The wind kinda ketched it there, I guess.

STELLA. You got the pipes up alone? Thanks, Luke. You must have had luck with them.

LUKE. Luckiest job o' that kind I ever done.

[STELLA *and* LAWRENCE *are surprised at the change in* LUKE'S *temper.*

LAWRENCE. By George, you're going to need that stove. It is getting colder already. I think, Mrs. Kirkman, we ought to start as soon as possible. The runway is better than I thought; that wind cleared quite a stretch. Mr. Parsons, your sister has decided to take a chance with me.

STELLA. The engine of the plane runs well.

LAWRENCE. As smooth as silk. The air's still and we

ought to hit up about one hundred and ten. The faster we go the better, with an extra load.

STELLA. Tomorrow I ought to bring back some supplies, Mr. Lawrence. Could you stand fifty pounds of flour, and a side of pork?

LAWRENCE. M-m, well. If it is not too heavy.

[*He comes to the fireplace and warms his hands.*

STELLA. Luke, get me the hot water bottle out of the cupboard. I'll need it for my feet.

[LUKE *comes to right front while* STELLA *is pulling clothing off the nails at rear, and choosing garments for her journey. The excitement of the prospect, and* LUKE'S *strange courtesy have made her almost cheerful.*

You want to tighten up your belt, Luke. You're all lop-sided. You carry too much in your pockets. I think I'll bring you a pair of braces to keep you from going crooked.

LUKE [*Embarrassed*]. Guess I have all my tobacco in one pocket. Look here, sis. You'd better let me go. It's too darn cold for any woman. What do you think, Mr. Lawrence?

LAWRENCE. It will be a frosty trip, all right. Of course it's not a long one—forty minutes at the outside; from thirty to forty.

LUKE [*To* STELLA]. I could look up the records in the Mining Office as well as you, mebbe better. You'd be comfortable here; lots o' wood an' things. And I'd be back in the mornin'. We've got to spend the winter somewheres, and its cheap here; when a feller has no job.

STELLA. That record is something I have to see for myself. I can trust my own eyes better than anybody

else's. I have made up my mind to go, even to fly, and I'm going.

LUKE. What if the wing should fail and you had to land miles from any shelter? It's too dangerous for a woman.

STELLA. Mr. Lawrence has made snow-camps before now, I guess.

LAWRENCE. Sure.

[*He picks up the paper behind the stove.*

STELLA [*To Luke*]. You've got mighty considerate all of a sudden. What's the matter with you?

LUKE. You're my sister, ain't you?

STELLA. You want to get to the Soo. Then I could whistle for you. I'd be here alone till Spring. I know you, Luke Parsons. The last month has opened my eyes. I might freeze to death for all you care. [*To* LAWRENCE] I am ready, Mr. Lawrence. I have plenty of clothes on, but I think I'll take a blanket to wrap around me.

LAWRENCE [*Still looking at the paper*]. A good idea.

[*Suddenly* STELLA *whips out the red blanket from the upper bunk and the money falls on the floor.*

STELLA. What's that?

LUKE. Damnation!

STELLA [*Picking up the packets*]. Why—why—it's money.

LAWRENCE. Jiminez! Our pay-roll! Mrs. Kirkman. Look; look at this paper. Did you ever see it before?

STELLA. No. What is it?

LAWRENCE. It was never in this room?

STELLA. I never saw it. What about it?

LAWRENCE. I found it just now on the floor—on the floor by the stove. Look; "S.M.&P. Co." That's our

Photo by Allan Sangster

Lake Doré—II

The exterior scene used at the end of the play in the first production to create the bleak and austere feeling of the wilderness into which Stella Kirkman went to her death. The hill and mountain forms seen were three-dimensional, stylized pieces painted a silver grey, with cold blue and green lights thrown on them. The setting was designed by Lowrie Warrener and executed by E. H. Thomas.

firm—Swiftwater Mining and Prospecting Company. And the date—11/8/25—four years ago last August—the day of the big robbery.

STELLA. Robbery?

LAWRENCE. At the Soo—the Commercial Bank. [*To* LUKE] Where did you find this? Quick!

LUKE. You're crazy.

LAWRENCE. You were putting up stovepipes. There's soot on it; and finger marks. Take off your mitts.

LUKE. I never knew anything about it. I found it.

LAWRENCE. In the pipe-hole.

STELLA. There's something heavy in his pocket—at the back.

LUKE [*To* STELLA]. You huzzy. [*To* LAWRENCE] It's tobacco.

LAWRENCE [*Advancing on him*]. We'll soon see.

LUKE [*Dodging behind the table*]. Keep your hands off me.

LAWRENCE. If you're ugly you'll get hurt. I'm a special constable; sworn in and everything; and this is our stuff. [*He seizes* LUKE *and twists his arm.*] Come across now. [*He takes the canvas sack out of* LUKE'S *pocket and tosses it on the table.* STELLA *puts the packages on the table as if they were burning her hands.*] You are under arrest.

LUKE. What for, you big boob? I didn't steal it. I didn't leave it here. I never saw it before. It's Kirkman's cabin—her husband. He built it the summer before he went to jail for smuggling dope. He was a bad egg. Everybody in the Soo thought he knew somethin' about the robbery, but they couldn't prove nothin'. I've proved it, by findin' the money.

LAWRENCE. And stealing it again.

LUKE. I was goin' to take it to the Bank. You've got nothin' on me.

LAWRENCE. Yes, you were: I don't think. [*He shoves* LUKE *towards the right rear corner, then opens the bag and runs the gold out on the table.*] I thought so. Fresh-minted stuff. [*Dramatic Pause.*

STELLA [*Rigid with horror*]. You think that Kirkman —my husband—was a thief?

LAWRENCE. I'm afraid it looks that way, ma'am. If he said there was gold here, this is what he meant. There are no mines in this district. There couldn't be with such a formation. It is useless for you to go to the Soo.

STELLA. O, merciful God! My husband!

LAWRENCE [*To* LUKE]. Get another coat, and take the blanket. You're going with me.

[*He returns the gold to the sack and puts the notes and the sack in his pockets.*

LUKE. Going with you?

LAWRENCE. To the Police Station at the Soo. I tell you, you are under arrest. Can't you understand plain English?

LUKE. You've nothin' on me, I tell you.

LAWRENCE. Receiving stolen goods. If you had told us when we came in—Oh, no. You were too cute. You said it was a lucky job, putting up the pipes. You'll find it was unlucky, with the Bank and the Company both against you. Bring that blanket, and get a move on you.

[*When* LAWRENCE *turns his back,* LUKE *seizes the snowshovel. Just as he swings it to strike*

LAWRENCE, STELLA *screams.* LAWRENCE *ducks under the shovel, seizes* LUKE, *and throws him easily to the floor.*

LUKE. Let me alone.

LAWRENCE. You're a treacherous beast, Parsons. Another move like that and I'll tie you up in a tump-line. By Gad, I'll do it anyway.

[*He rises and goes upstage to the hooks to look for one.*

STELLA. There's one by the window.

LUKE. I'll go quiet; you ain't got nothin' on me.

[*He picks up his mitts and the red blanket.*

[*Pause.*

LAWRENCE [*To* STELLA]. I'm sorry, ma'am. I'll come back for you to-morrow and take you out. You'll have to be a witness. Good-bye. [*To* LUKE] Go on, you. [*To* STELLA] About noon to-morrow, Mrs. Kirkman.

[*Exeunt* LUKE *and* LAWRENCE.

[STELLA *sinks down before the table, her head on her arms. She does not weep; but sits perfectly still for six counts. Then she lifts her head and stares into the audience.*

STELLA. A witness. A witness.

[*The roar of an aeroplane is heard. Gradually it fades, and ceases.*

A witness. Against you, my dear? Never.

[*She rises, goes to the rear door, opens it, and looks out at the yellow sky in the north. Standing there, with her gaze fixed afar, she removes her coat, mackinaw, and cap, letting them fall unregarded to the floor. She is now in a thin,*

black dress, bare-armed, and low-necked, her hands clenched by her sides.

The streets of Heaven; the streets of Heaven. Jake, my dear. Yes, yes. I hear you. I'm coming—coming.

[*Slowly she walks through the door and closes it behind her.*

LIGHTS OUT

[*The lights slowly rise revealing once more the Johnston picture-drop.*

CURTAIN

GOD-FORSAKEN

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

By Charles Edwin Carruthers

CHARACTERS

Mrs. Bradley, *the mother*
Tode Bradley, *the lame son*
Urlis Bradley, *the daughter*
Mrs. Ruth Perkins, *a sister-in-law of Mrs. Bradley*
Mr. Elijah Perkins, *her husband*
Hiram Brown, *village store-keeper*
Editor Hummel, *editor of the village weekly*
Jimmie Spoder, *a boy of the village.*

God-Forsaken was first produced at the Central High School of Commerce, Toronto, under the direction of Herman A. Voaden, on April 9, 1930.

CHARLES EDWIN CARRUTHERS was born at London, Ontario, of Scottish parents. In his seventeenth year he painted "Theatre" and his own name in large letters on the side of a second-hand trunk, and took a train to Rochester, Minnesota, where he had signed up with a stock company as a professional actor. A varied and interesting theatrical experience followed in the next ten years. As light comedian, character actor, and leading man he played with repertory companies at one-night stands and in permanent stock. Stage directing followed and not till the movies made the "road" business unprofitable did he bid farewell to the theatre and begin newspaper work. For the past ten years he has been City Editor of the *London Free Press*. But he has found time to interest himself in the amateur theatre reading, acting, and directing plays.

Mr. Carruthers is the author of ten or twelve one-act plays, some of which have been produced professionally. Three of his plays, "The Cure", "At Half Past Three", and "Plain Folk", received honourable mention in competitions sponsored by the Montreal Branch of the Canadian Authors' Association. "The Cure" was produced at the Capitol Theatre in London in 1927. Other plays are "The Last of the Tragedians", "Storm Bound", and a three-act drama, "The Cage", written in collaboration with T. R. Elliot.

"God-Forsaken" was suggested by a conversation overheard by Mr. Carruthers in a Western Ontario town while he was waiting for a train. In general spirit and comment on Canadian life and character it offers a sharp contrast to the other plays in the volume. Its sardonic, exaggerated humour also strikes a different note. Its setting is in the hill section of old Ontario rather than in the North.

GOD-FORSAKEN

SCENE: *A remote place in the hills. Ploughed fields lead to hills in the background. The stage represents a yard outside an old dilapidated farmhouse, with door-step, bench, and a stump or two seen.*

MRS. BRADLEY [*Sitting on the bench, peeling potatoes*]. Most time for Tode to be home from the village, Urlis.

URLIS [*Looking off-stage*]. Yes Ma, more than time. He's been gone an hour. Can't get supper till he gets here. Ain't no tea or flour left.

MRS. BRADLEY. Tode will fetch some. He won't be long now. Poor boy can't travel up the hills fast on account of his lame leg.

URLIS. It's getting terribly cold. Winter will soon be here now. Wish we had more clothes and things like other folks.

MRS. BRADLEY. 'Tain't no good wishing. We're poor as Job's turkey. The land's worn out and the crop this year ain't no account. We just got to make out the best we can and trust to providence.

URLIS. Providence ain't much good to feed you and put clothes on your back. [*Goes to centre stage.*

MRS. BRADLEY. It's no use of complaining, Urlis. It only make folks feel worse. Poor Tode can't work the farm. We'll make shift somehow till times is better. See if Tode is coming.

URLIS. Here he is now Ma, limping along, an' reading as usual.

MRS. BRADLEY. Where's yer parcels, Tode. Forget them?

TODE [*Entering*]. Hiram Brown says he ain't going to let us have nary another pound of tea or sugar or cup of flour till our bill's cleared. [*Sits on bench down right.*] He was going to say a lot more, but he run out of wind.

URLIS. The mean old skunk, better save his breath to make prayers with. Now what are we going to do? We got to eat.

TODE. Oh, we'll get along somehow, won't we, mother? [*Goes to mother.*] I found some flowers hiding from the frost: they ain't much, just straggly wild phlox.

MRS. BRADLEY. For me, Tode?

TODE. Yes, Ma.

MRS. BRADLEY. Yer wouldn't come home without bringing something for yer ma. If Hiram Brown gave yer a stone when yer asked fer bread, he didn't take the music out of yer life, did he, Tode? Yer haven't lost faith in humans?

TODE. Ain't got much faith in many humans, but I have a lot in flowers and animals. Flowers is not only pretty, but sometimes I think they have a soul. A soul that sends messages of love and comfort to poor folks like us. I wish they could talk.

MRS. BRADLEY. They do talk to yer, Tode. They whisper fergiveness and peace and yer brings the message to me. They give thoughts that are too deep to tell.

TODE. When I wander among the thousands of wild flowers God put in these hills, I wonder if it ain't just a little bit of heaven.

MRS. BRADLEY. Mebbe so, Tode. If 'tis to you, I guess it is. What we believe is so, I recken.

URLIS. Let's move away. I'm tired of living in these hills where the land's so darn poor.

MRS. BRADLEY. No, Urlis, we can't move away. We're settlers an' have pride. We sicken and suffer and die an' like animals make no noise, but we mostly live our lives out where we was born.

URLIS. Well, yer can stay here, but I won't. I'm going to a big city and see people and things, and wear decent clothes. I'm starving for the sight of something besides hills and the same vittles—when we have any.

TODE. If she's set on going, Ma, I guess she must. She's like the mocking birds I caged early this spring. I let 'em go. I couldn't stand listening to them beating their wings against the cage to be free.

MRS. BRADLEY. I don't see how we're going to manage without yer, Urlis. Fer me, I ain't never been away from here. If yer go, nothing will be the same. The winds will keep me awake at nights whispering about you as they did when yer brother Rafe went away. The stars will stop shining and the moon will turn black. I kind of figgered yer wouldn't stay, somehow.

URLIS. I want to be like Rafe, travel, and see somethin'. Why don't we go and see folks, or folks come and set with us?

TODE. I reckon its because the hand of God is on us. We ain't no account any more.

MRS. BRADLEY. No. It 'taint. It's because we didn't have a regular funeral fer yer pa. Folks here in these parts is judged by the quality and size of the funerals they have.

URLIS. It's a mighty mean way to judge folks, I say.

MRS. BRADLEY. With yer father sick fer years we wasn't able to give him a hearse funeral with a coffin and silver plate and engraved invites. We made a box and I lined it with blankets and we buried yer pa in the corner of the south pasture field. The farm is mortgaged to the hilt, but I guess Hy Milton won't mind. Yer pa and him was right friendly and it won't hurt the field none. I'm gettin' too old to move away, and besides, I can't leave yer pa all alone here. I wish I knew where Rafe is.

URLIS. The only folks come to see us is pa's sister, and she treats us as if we wasn't human.

MRS. BRADLEY. Time was when Ruth Perkins and me was chums but circumstances bring big changes. Her man has lots of money now. Few years ago they was poor as a razorback.

URLIS. Here comes the old devil now and she's toting a bag of insults with her.

MRS. PERKINS. Well, well. Mame Bradley! And how are you? You certainly look puny. And Urlis, my dear, and Tode, you poor boy. Too bad your head ain't right. My! Everthing looks old and shabby here. Must make you feel terrible that you can't afford to buy some decent things. Elijah, bring along that bundle of clothes I fetched for these poor critters. Elijah is pretty well, thank you. Say howdy to Mame and the children, Elijah.

MR. PERKINS. Hello, folks, hope you're all well.

MRS. PERKINS. Here, let me have that bundle, Elijah. Now cut the rope with your knife, Elijah. The pearl-handled one I gave you last Christmas. Everybody sit down while I show you what I got. There's two pairs of them underdrawers and not a break in them. As soon

as I seen Elijah laying them aside, I said, 'Them things will be just right for Tode.' They may not be much of a fit, but of course you can't be choosey. I been at Elijah for years to buy him some union suits, you know what I mean, but he's so set on two piece. Thinks he gets more for his money. But now he's got lots of cash I guess he can spare them.

TODE. Thank yer. They will be right handy fer I ain't got much clothes. People don't care to give alms without security, and a wooden leg or a withered arm is a sort of draft on heaven for those who have their charity placed on account there.

MRS. PERKINS. What's the loon talking about? I ain't got no wooden leg or arm.

URLIS. Don't mind him, aunt. That's something he read some place.

MRS. PERKINS. And here's a hat, Mame. It ain't a mite worn out, and fer all you'll need one, it's plenty good enough. I only wore it two years and I guess folks won't remember it anyhow; an' what if they do—they all know you get my things. And this fur neckpiece, it's just the thing for Urlis. It's worn a trifle and the moths got in it, but that won't matter, it's warm.

MRS. BRADLEY. Thanks, Ruth.

MRS. PERKINS. No thanks necessary. Somebody's got to look after the poor, and it might as well be us. Now here is an old dress. It can easy be made to fit you. 'Tain't much but it's better than none at all.

MR. PERKINS. You ain't had any news of Rafe in quite a spell, have you?

MRS. BRADLEY. Not fer over a year.

MRS. PERKINS. Probably in jail some place and 'fraid to write home. Never was any good much, but to sit around the house and soak up the heat. Was pretty heavy eater too.

URLIS. Rafe never was a coward. He would write from jail or any other place, if he wanted to. You leave my brother alone. He got tired of the narrow-minded people around here and went away to see the world. He was in Europe last we heard of him. Gee, I wish I was with him.

TODE. In judging others, folks work overtime for no pay.

MRS. PERKINS. Tode, you stop that kind of talk. I can't understand whether you're praising or insulting me.

TODE. Man is unjust, but God is just, and finally righteousness prevails.

MR. PERKINS. Right you are, Tode. Jim Sillers owed Sam Willoby money on his farm fer ten years. Finally Sam got tired waiting and sued Jim and the court ordered him to pay. That's what I call justice and righteousness.

MRS. PERKINS. Well Mame, I didn't see you out at the Hawkin's funeral. I don't suppose though anyone really expected you, seeing how things are with you. When you was a girl you counted as big as any and went round with the best, but now— [*coughs deprecatingly.*

MRS. BRADLEY. Yes, yes, Ruth. Times is changed.

MRS. PERKINS. Funerals are exhausting though, even if they are for distant relatives.

MRS. BRADLEY. Hank will miss Maggie. She was a fine cook.

MRS. PERKINS. Everybody in these parts is talking about that funeral. My land, it was swell! For my own

TORONTO

I wouldn't ask fer anything better. Think of it! Twelve cabs and a auto hearse that came all the way from Weston—all pale gray with plumes on it, and a shoffer in a black uniform. It was what I call real classy.

URLIS. Gee, I wish I'd been there. I never even saw an auto hearse.

TODE. The world is full of deceit.

MRS. PERKINS. Eh—What's that—? Tode, will you keep quiet while I'm talking.

MR. PERKINS. Go ahead, Ruth. Don't forget the choir.

MRS. PERKINS. Maggie wasn't what you would call well off—not as lucky as some people, you know, but she certainly went off grand. The whole Baptist choir was out. Sang three numbers in broken time; and her second cousin's brother-in-law from way down east some place, some kind of a bishop I guess, preached. Honest it was one of the grandest sermons I ever laid an ear to. Wasn't it, Elijah?

MR. PERKINS. A strong, moral sermon all round—that's what I would call it. A man couldn't hear it without being humiliated, more ways than one. Yes! It was a most powerful influence for humility.

MRS. PERKINS. It's a pity you couldn't have gone, Mame. You and Maggie always so intimate too! You certainly missed a great treat. Course if you hadn't the right clothes—

MRS. BRADLEY. Well, I haven't. I don't go anywhere, not even to church, and you know it.

MRS. PERKINS. That's right. Too bad though. Time was when it was different. Everybody talks about how bad off you are. Martha Janders said she saw you in

town a while back and wouldn't of knowed you if it hadn't been you was wearing my old green coat and she recognized it. Her and me got them both alike by mail order. She said she could hardly believe it was you.

MRS. BRADLEY. Sometimes I wonder myself if it is.

MRS. PERKINS. As I was saying, it was a grand funeral. Never was a better in these parts. Why they even had engraved invites—had over a hundred printed, and folks came from all over the county. Ebenezer Hawkshaw had the contract for the supper.

MR. PERKINS. Had the best of everything. None of your cheap stuff. Told Ebenezer to go ahead and give them the best. Had twenty-two cakes.

MRS. PERKINS. An' Jed Howden, the undertaker, is telling all over they got the best quality shroud he has in stock. You'll find it all in "The Weekly Buzzer" under "Death's Busy Sickle". Hank Hawkins certainly set a store by Maggie, once she was dead. It was a swell affair. Not but what we've had some good ones in our time too.

MR. PERKINS. A thing like that sorta sets a family up.

MRS. PERKINS. I always says that a person shows up really what he is at the end—what him and his family stands for. It's what kind of a funeral you got that counts—who comes out and all. And that was true with Maggie. There wasn't a soul worth naming that wasn't out to hers.

URLIS. Gee whiz, I wish I could have been there. We never have any fun.

MRS. PERKINS. Would be some comfort to you, Mame, I guess, if you knew Rafe wasn't in jail.

MRS. BRADLEY. Rafe is a Justin. Yer can't tell how he will turn out.

TODE. Don't you worry none 'bout Rafe. He'll make good some day and be a bigger man than any in these parts.

MRS. PERKINS. Well I hope so, but I doubt it. A bad penny is a bad penny, I say. I'm sorry, though, he happens to be your offspring, Mame. He takes after your side of the house. Well, we must trot along. Come on, Elijah! We won't ask you to come and see us, knowing your condition, but we will try and get around to see you some time again this year. Hope the things we brought will help some. Got more than plenty and can spare them. Good bye. [*Exit.*

URLIS. Gee, look'it! Ma, more of them prunes we liked so and enough fresh soup meat fer a week.

MRS. BRADLEY. Did yer sense what it meant, Tode—what Aunt Ruth told us about Maggie Hawkins? We was left out malicious, that's what it meant. Her and me what was raised together and went to school and picnics all our girlhood. We was always chummy. But—I don't get no invite to her funeral. I don't count no more, Tode. None of us is anything. We're just them "poor, God-forsaken Bradleys".

URLIS. Don't take on, Ma, don't.

MRS. BRADLEY. I ain't crying. No use making a fuss. All's left's to work—to work an' die after a while.

URLIS. I hate Aunt Ruth and Uncle Elijah—I hate 'em and the whole parcel of folks around here.

MRS. BRADLEY. They mean kindness—their way.

URLIS. Well, it's a mighty mean way. I hate 'em. I'd like to—Oh, damn 'em.

TODE. Don't swear, Urlis. Swearing's the only vice that gives no pleasure.

URLIS. Well, it gives me satisfaction, and a lot of it.

MRS. BRADLEY. I wish Rafe would write. It's galling to hear Aunt Ruth say mean things about the boy and yer can't answer back. Rafe isn't a bad boy. He's just active and full of animal spirits.

TODE. When he went away in the middle of the night, he put his arms around me and whispered that he was going away fer quite a long spell. Don't yer worry, Ma, he'll do something big fer us some day.

MRS. BRADLEY. I know he will, Tode. He'll show these folks that we ain't the "God-forsaken Bradleys".

TODE. Ye loved him the most, didn't ye, Ma?

MRS. BRADLEY. Why, Tode, he was my first. His head was that round and shiny when he was a little fellow it was like to a little apple. I mind before he ever come I bought me a cap fer him over at Weston, with a red bow onto it. He looked awful pretty and smart in it. [*A whistle is heard.*] See who's coming up the hill, Urlis.

URLIS. Why, it's little Jimmie Spoder. Come in, Jimmie.

JIMMIE [*Entering*]. Postmaster sent me up with these special delivery letters. Said this one was from Rafe, he thought, and to rush it.

MRS. BRADLEY. Thanks, Jimmie. [*Jimmie goes out.*] From Rafe. At last, Tode, a letter from Rafe. Give it to me.

'Dear kind folks, mother, father, brother and sister: When I get far enough away I guess I dare call you that. I guess you don't mind. I came over to France with some other fellows on a cattle boat. We was valets to

the cattle. Was coming home again when I heard about the war with the Riffs. Ma's guessed already what happened. Its that roving streak in me. Never could stick to nothing steady. It got me pretty bad when I was taking in the sights of France. So I joined up with the Foreign Legion for service in Morocco. The Army's shorthanded and so far I like it fine. Expect to get a cushy job, as they say in the army, although I'm only in the ranks yet.'

URLIS. He'll be a general some day, Ma.

MRS. BRADLEY. 'Gee the price of things is high here. You can write me care of the Foreign Legion. Won't I have some great stories to tell Tode and Urlis when I get home. I'll make their eyes stand out. I hope that Pa is better and Ma have a kiss on me. Sorry I ain't got any money to send you yet. I sure appreciate you all. Well so-long. Your son, Rafe Bradley.'

Oh Rafe, Rafe, I'm so glad he's safe and well.

TODE. I always knew he'd turn out a big man.

URLIS. Our Rafe's a soldier hero. Aunt Ruth will be disappointed he ain't in jail.

MRS. BRADLEY. Here is the other letter. 'Mrs. Mamie Bradley, Brookline, Ont.—Dear Madam: We regret to inform you that Private Rafe Bradley, of the Foreign Legion, was killed in action on August the twenty-fifth, while fighting against the Riffians in the Ceuta sector. He was buried in the French military cemetery in Morocco. Further details will follow.'

Dead—dead—my Rafe is dead.

TODE. He's safe anyhow, Ma—remember that. Times he was rolling round we didn't know where he was.

You worried a lot about him too. It's all for the best.

[*He tries to comfort his mother.*

MRS. BRADLEY. Rafe's gone and he never knew his pa was dead. Well, maybe they'll meet soon. Wish I was with them. I been hungry all my life fer Rafe—he was vittles to me.

[*Enter Mr. and Mrs. Perkins.*

MRS. PERKINS. Heard in the village that Rafe was killed fighting savages in Africa. I was always sure he would come to some bad end.

MR. PERKINS. We come back to sympathize with you. Mame.

URLIS. We can do without yer kind of sympathy.

[*Enter* HIRAM BROWN *and* EDITOR HUMMEL.

EDITOR HUMMEL. Hope we don't intrude, Mrs. Bradley, but I heard about Rafe's death and came here to get something about it for "The Weekly Buzzer".

URLIS. What do you want snooping round here, Hiram Brown? Why ain't you in your store selling sand for sugar?

HIRAM BROWN. Here's a queer looking letter with a foreign postmark just arrived, so I brung it up as soon as I could. Thought you'd want to read it right away.

MRS. PERKINS. Give it to me, Hiram. I'll read it to Mame.

MRS. BRADLEY. No, let Editor Hummel read it.

EDITOR HUMMEL. 'Headquarters Foreign Legion, Ceuta, Morocco.'

MRS. PERKINS. Must be some outlandish place.

EDITOR HUMMEL. 'Mrs. Mamie Bradley, Brookline, Ont. It is my most unpleasant duty to inform you that your son Pte. Rafe Bradley was instantly killed by a shell on August twenty-fifth. But he died a hero. He

gave his life to save a comrade. Under heavy shell fire from Riffian artillery, he went out in front of our trenches to bring in a man who was badly wounded.'

MRS. PERKINS. Humph!

EDITOR HUMMEL. 'Just as he had reached apparent safety an enemy shell dropped and he was instantly killed. The body was brought from the battle ground to Katska by airplane.'

MRS. PERKINS. My Lands, an airplane funeral!

EDITOR HUMMEL. 'He was laid to rest in the soldiers' cemetery at Katska. At the head of the coffin was placed on a white satin cushion the Croix de Guerre—a gold star on red-and-green ribbon, and beside it the medal given by Spain which only the greatest act of bravery merits, the Golden Fleece.

'Two priests with soldier attendants led the procession. Following the coffin came a guard from the Foreign Legion and representatives of the different sections of the French and Spanish armies. The street was lined with civilians, all anxious to do honor to the man who gave his life for a friend.'

MRS. PERKINS. Grand, wasn't it, Mame?

EDITOR HUMMEL. 'In the little church a choir of fifty soldiers sang, while the chaplain of the army division conducted the burial services. The chaplain's sermon I will have copied and sent to you, together with the medals and other effects of your son's. After leaving the church the procession marched to the military cemetery where your son's body was laid with hundreds of others who have given their lives for France and Spain.'

URLIS. Oh Ma! Our Rafe! All—that—funeral! Some funeral, Ma!

MRS. BRADLEY. My Rafe—My Rafe—Buried like a king—like a king of France! A "God-forsaken Bradley", despised and rejected of earth, borne to the grave like a king!

MRS. PERKINS. There never was nothing like that ever heard about around here. Carried in an airplaine hearse! My, it was the swellest funeral I ever heard of.

MRS. BRADLEY. I been a fool to grieve. My Rafe was a hero and I never knowed it. A hero's mother hadn't ought to cry. Ma ain't been any good to you children of late. You're getting all white and peaked. Too much fretting about folks in this valley. Folks around here ain't going to lord it over us no more.

HIRAM BROWN. Mrs. Bradley, yer can have any groceries you want from my store and I don't care if you never pay fer them.

URLIS. You've refused us.

HIRAM BROWN. Yesterday ain't today, is it? And today is not tomorrow. I ain't said anything about that trifling matter today, have I?

EDITOR HUMMEL. Mrs. Bradley, I want a copy of that letter and the sermon and a picture of Rafe to put in the weekly Buzzer. It's going to take the whole front page and an editorial inside. Want to say I'm real proud of Rafe; and the whole district will ring with his praises. We must hold a memorial service in the church. We want you to share this great honor with us. Are you willing?

MRS. BRADLEY. I guess so if yer want to.

EDITOR HUMMEL. Well, that's the spirit.

MRS. BRADLEY. Tode and Urlis and me will sit in the seat of honor right up front. It'll be the greatest funeral service the town's ever seen.

MRS. PERKINS. And Elijah and me will sit right in the front seat with you.

MRS. BRADLEY. You'll do nothing of the sort.

MRS. PERKINS. And why not?

MRS. BRADLEY. Because this is our funeral, not yours.

CURTAIN

WINDS OF LIFE

A DRAMA IN ONE ACT

By Dora Smith Conover

CHARACTERS

Mary Fryer, *the mother*
George Fryer, *the father*
Harry Fryer, *the son*
Ken Macdonald, *a farmer-guide*
Allan Henderson, *a newspaperman*

"Winds of Life" was produced by G. K. D. Alderson at the Central High School of Commerce, Toronto, on April 9, 1930.

THERE are certain characters that obviously do not "belong" to the North Country. John Fryer, the father in "Winds of Life", is one of these. Transplanted from his own land to an alien environment, he is "drying up with the wind and sun and the long, long cold".

But his sturdy young son *does* "belong". Harry Fryer likes the feel of the winds and the smell of the woods. He loves the country and exults in it. It is his home. He would not be happy elsewhere.

It is possible that the playwright saw more in Thomson's great picture, "The West Wind", than a setting for her play. Perhaps in her mind "The West Wind", "forever blowing" became symbolic of the hardship and challenge of the North, symbolic of life winds that blow steadily, testing men and women and separating the weak from the strong.

Dora Smith Conover, author of "Winds of Life" has contributed to newspapers and periodicals since her graduation from Victoria College in the University of Toronto. Although she has written several one-act plays which have been read in public and have attracted favourable attention, "Winds of Life" is the first to be printed or produced. She is married and lives in Toronto.

WINDS OF LIFE

The scene is beside a lake in Northern Ontario—in the mood of Tom Thomson's painting—West Wind. The brave, wind-tortured tree stands clear-cut against the sky. A tall, weather-worn rock affords an outlook over the lake and runs from the left sloping down about centre stage. Behind is another long rock running back to the right and to this the tree clings, wind-blown. At the right front corner is a group of rocks and tall coarse grass, the outlines of the latter showing that it is also frantically wind-blown—the wind coming from the left. A path runs behind this and across in front of the outlook rock.

It is late afternoon in autumn. The sky is lighted by one of those weird, red sunsets which so often follow on a windy day.

When the curtain rises, MARY FRYER *with the red sunset light full on her anxious face, is seen gazing out against the wind [left]. She is standing on the look-out rock and her thin form is poised, weary but firm against the buffeting. She is dressed in a dull, brownish-red dress, plain and long and rather full, and has pulled a shawl partially over her head and shoulders.*

MARY FRYER *is a woman in her middle thirties—work-worn but maintaining a distinct and entirely unconscious air of good breeding.*

Her attention is diverted by a shot which comes from the right. She turns and looks along the path. She calls.

MARY. Yooohoo—Hah-ry.

[*There is a second shot while she continues to listen and look eagerly. She calls again.*

MARY. Hah-ry—yoo-hoo.

HARRY [*Off-stage briskly*]. Yoo-hoo—

[*She waits smiling gently and a moment later a tall and particularly well-grown boy of about fifteen swings into view from the right. He wears an old but once gay wind-breaker. All his clothes are old and sturdy and shabby but worn with the same gallant, eager air as the old cap on the back of his rumpled but well-held head. He carries a shot-gun and a dead rabbit.*

HARRY. H'lo, ma.

MARY. Hello, son.

HARRY. Had your supper?

MARY. Not yet—your dad's still out on the lake—I've been watching for him.

HARRY. Look, ma.

[HARRY *holds up his rabbit.* MARY *smiles, picks her way down the rock and looks at the rabbit appreciatively.*

MARY. A beauty.

HARRY. Just potted him this minute—I 'as bound I'd get something.

MARY. Fine—did you get the MacDonald's potatoes all in?

HARRY. Sure did—gee, ma, that Jean's a good little worker—for a girl—'n say, 'fore I forget—Mrs. MacDonald said to tell you she had some new quilt patterns and now the outside work is pretty near over, she's going to come soon and bring her sewing for the day.

MARY. Splendid.

HARRY [*Quickly*]. You're not keen about her—are you, ma?

MARY. Harry!—what an idea—why Ellie MacDonald's the best-hearted neighbor anyone could have.

HARRY [*Pondering*]. I know—but—maybe it's the way she talks so much 'n' never says anything really—you're different, you know, ma—kinda quiet 'n' deep somehow—

MARY. Harry, dear—how critical you are growing.

HARRY. Aw—I didn't mean it like that.

MARY. I know, dear.

[*She turns and quietly makes her way up the rock again.*

MARY [*Anxiously*]. Harry, don't you think your father should be off the lake before this?

HARRY. Oh, any time now—Gee, I wish he'd a let *me* go out with that Yankee fellow.

MARY. You know Ken MacDonald had to be out and you'd promised to go over to help—besides, your dad is nervous about you taking a tourist by yourself yet.

HARRY [*Shortly*]. Needn't be—I'm a blamed sight better at handling a canoe than he is.

MARY [*Defensively—turning and looking down at him*]. He does very well—he's always hated it. He never goes if there's anyone else to take the job.

HARRY. I know—that's why we never have any money.

MARY. You shouldn't talk like that about your father, Harry.

[*She turns away and resumes her searching of the water.*

HARRY [*Stubbornly*]. Well—it's true—he's good at the farming but there's no money in that back here—next summer I'm going to guide anyone who'll let me take them out.

MARY [*Quickly*]. Harry—come here—

[HARRY *runs up the rock beside her.*

MARY [*Pointing*]. What *is* that—over there—it's been drifting closer with the wind.

HARRY. Might be a log.

[*He glances off and his attention is attracted by something down closer toward his right.*

HARRY. Oh look, ma—there's someone at the landing *now*—they've come round the bend.

MARY. Can hardly be your dad—he went straight down the lake.

HARRY. No—it's Ken MacDonald. Gee, ma, do you know Ken says I'll be the best guide round here 'fore I'm full grown.

MARY. He likes to fool people.

HARRY. But he means it, ma—really—Say! Who's that he had out to-day?

MARY. That newspaper man from Toronto.

HARRY [*Delightedly*]. Oh gee—he sure does like to string *that* kind of people.

MARY [*Smiling in spite of herself*]. It was a shame the stuff he got them to print in the papers last year.

HARRY [*Highly pleased*]. About the wolves that brought the little, lost boy home on their backs—gee! he's a great kidder, ma!

MARY. Go ask if they've seen your dad.

HARRY. All right, ma—they're right here.

[HARRY *runs down the rock looking eagerly along the path. Voices of a couple of men are heard from the left and then two men enter, laden with fishing tackle, and evidently well pleased with themselves.*

[KEN MACDONALD *is a tall, lank Scotchman known as the wag of the countryside.*

[ALLAN HENDERSON *is a young reporter out on his holidays.*

KEN [*Nodding*]. 'Lo, Harry—Yes siree, Mr. Henderson—a sure 'nuff sea serpent—been seen just off Fryer's look-out here, more'n oncet.

HENDERSON [*Suitably impressed*]. A real sea serpent!

KEN [*Warming up*]. Sure thing—'N oncet I was's close ter him as I am ter Harry there.

HENDERSON. You don't say so?

KEN. Sa-ay—I wan't more'n jest beyond Fryer's boathouse when the gosh-darned thing begun rearing itself out ev the water—yards 'n yards ev it—dead, slimy, white—with glarin' eyes like er couple er lanterns.

HENDERSON. Gosh!

KEN. Wa-al, I didn't stop ter look at the bright lights none—I made fer the landin' so fast thet there reptile couldn't see me fer the backwash.

HENDERSON. Wheew—that must have been some experience.

KEN. Sure was. [*Anxiously*] Ain't yer goin' ter write it down somewheres?

HENDERSON. Say—I couldn't forget a word—reminds me of the Okanagan serpent—we had a ripping story on that.

KEN [*Grandly*]. Wa-al, there ain't no serpant *anywheres* as can tech this here one.

[KEN *nudges the delighted* HARRY *with sly appreciation of his own humor.*

[*They are interrupted by a call from* MARY.

MARY. Ken—did you see anything of George?

KEN. Why, evenin', Mrs. Fryer—no—I ain't seen anythin' of George sence we passed yer house this mornin'—has he ben out?

MARY. Yes—all day—with an American called Mr. Peters.

KEN. Hevn't seen hide nor hair o' them—must've gone another direction. [*Turning to* HARRY] Should've let *you* go, lad—yer're handier with a canoe than yer dad by a long shot.

HARRY. I know—dad hates it—says he does—but if he hates a thing, that doesn't mean he can't do it—my dad's an old soldier and a darned good soldier!

KEN [*Nodding*]. Funny thing that—this lad's pa got all the distinguished service medals thet the king could pin onto him—yet this here country hes him buffaloed.

HARRY [*Hotly*]. *Say*—his farm's the best one round here!

KEN [*Good naturedly*]. 'Cause the rest uv us knows our onions, lad—what's a use er drudging no end—this here's a great country—great fer huntin' 'n' fishin' but it weren't never planned fer the gentleman farmer—not yet it ain't.

HARRY. Dad never sets himself up for that!

KEN. I know—lad—I know—he jest cain't ferget thet he hails from the old land and hed a better eddication than the rest ev us old-timers. That's what I think of eddication—unsettles a fellow—keeps him from enjoyin' his life es he finds it. That's why I won't let my lass Jean go on ter High School in town—teacher says it's a plumb waste er good brains but I says it's a dumb waste er good lass ter get her all blethered up with high fallutin' notions.

HENDERSON [*Sympathetically*]. Maybe this George Fryer hasn't been over here long enough to really get onto the country.

KEN. Ever sence the war—This lad here wan't no higher'n my knee when they came in.

HENDERSON [*Admiringly*]. *He's* taken to it all right.

KEN [*Heartily*]. I should *say* so—we all like Harry—clever lad too—best shot 'round here an' he knows every lake 'n' crick fer miles in every direction.

HENDERSON. I'll have to have him go out with me.

HARRY [*Pleased but embarrassed*]. Aw say—that Ken—he just likes to *talk*.

HENDERSON [*With a twinkle*]. So I've noticed—about pink sea serpents with green eyes.

KEN [*Springing into form*]. Say—you should have writ it down—Mr. Henderson—anyone would think it was jest a dam *fish* story.

HENDERSON. Oh, I'll get it into the papers just as you told it, Ken.

[MARY *calls again, pointing anxiously.*

MARY. Ken—come here—look—

[KEN *climbs up the rock and stands looking out.*

HARRY [*Eagerly*]. Are you really going to put it in the paper?

HENDERSON. Sure I am—the dear public loves it—I'll get our artist to make one of his on-the-spot drawings—he can show moose swimming frantically away from the terror—mamma bears huddling their cubs up tall trees for safety, and fishes—quite *big* fishes—ducking for the shadow of the canoe.

HARRY [*Laughing*]. Aw say—you're on to him, aren't you—isn't he fun, the stuff he springs?

MARY [*Shrilly*]. Ken—it's a *canoe*—it's George's canoe—I know it's George's canoe and—it's *empty.*

[HARRY *turns at her voice—then runs up the rock beside them.* HENDERSON *climbs part way up where he can see.*

KEN [*Deliberately*]. It's a canoe, ma'm—an' it's empty—leastways there ain't no one settin' up in it—though it's driftin' kinda slow fer sech a stiff breeze—did George go *down* the lake?

MARY [*Anxiously*]. Yes—someone had told Mr. Peters there was specially good fishin' near the Devil's Gulch.

KEN. Musta been kiddin' him—George shoulda knowed better—say—ef the canoe tipped near them rapids—there wouldn't be no remains ter view.

MARY [*Frantically*]. Ken—Ken—don't—

KEN. I'm sorry, ma'm—I didn't go fer ter frighten ye—but—well, you know about them rapids well es I do—George should never a gone near them on sech a day—specially with a greenhorn. Ev course the wind bein' this way would ketch the canoe an' bring it along if they weren't too close ter begin with, but ef a fellow got into thet there undercurrent—waall thet ud be the end of him, ma'm.

MARY. Oh, Ken—do something—hurry.

[*Ken goes down the rock preceded by Henderson.*

HENDERSON. Are those the rapids that no one has ever shot?

KEN [*Significantly*]. Two guys hev tried—an' nothin' was ever seen again of either o' them.

MARY. Oh, isn't there *anything* can be done?

HARRY. I'm going out, ma.

[*Harry runs down the rock and out the path to the left.*

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The West Wind

Tom Thomson, woodsman, guide, and artist, lived in the north country from early spring till the first fall of snow. His amazing development in a few years from his early amateurish paintings to the sombre maturity, rich colour, and deep poetic feeling of his last canvases, and his strange and sudden death by drowning on Canoe Lake, Algonquin Park, in 1917, have made him an almost mythical figure in the annals of Canadian Art. "Winds of Life" was suggested by his picture, "The West Wind".

HENDERSON. We'll certainly do what we can, Mrs. Fryer—we're going right out to interview that canoe—possibly it isn't your husband's at all.

KEN. Sure, ma'm—don't you worry none—not yet—there might be someone in it at that—movin' mighty slow seems ter me.

HENDERSON. Come on, man—hurry—

[*He dashes off left towards the boat-house followed by Ken. Mary continues to strain her eyes in the direction of the derelict. The redness has faded out of the sky which changes to the luminous blue-white of moonlight. In a moment Harry comes back (without his gun).*

HARRY. They sent me back, ma—to stay with you.

[*He joins her on the rock.*

MARY. Look, Harry—it's almost opposite the boat-house.

[*They both watch intently and Harry awkwardly puts his arm about his mother.*

HARRY. Aw, ma—don't—everything'll be all right, ma—an' if it isn't, ma—I'll look after you—we c'n run things somehow—you'n me.

MARY [*Unheeding*]. He could swim—Harry.

HARRY. Dad? Sure he could, ma—he'll be all right.

MARY. Look—Harry—there they go.

HARRY. My! They got out quick—that reporter guy's real handy with a paddle—golly, but they're makin' good time—considerin' the waves—look, ma—seem's if they've seen something—sure enough—there they are along side—golly, they've got hold of something—dragging it out of the water—oh ma, *look*—it's a *man*—gee—they'll be over, too!

MARY. My God, Harry—it *is* a man—and there's only *one*! [*She hides her face in her hands.*] Go—and find out, Harry.

HARRY [*Starting, but hesitating*]. Gee, ma—I hate to leave you.

MARY. Never mind—go—I can't—not for a minute.

[*She sinks to her knees—her face in her hands. The boy hurries off (left) glad of something to do.* GEORGE FRYER *appears from the right moving rather wearily. He is a slight man of middle height with a quick, unhappy, nervous manner. He looks about anxiously at the foot of the rock as if not wishing to be seen. He sees Mary—pauses, turns, and climbs part way up the rock to her. He pauses and speaks quietly.*

GEORGE [*Quietly*]. Don't be frightened, Mary—it's me.

MARY [*Turning and struggling to her feet*]. George!

GEORGE. Hush.

[*He takes a couple of steps up to her and catches her in his arms.*

MARY [*With a sob*]. Oh, George—you're safe!

GEORGE. Yes—Mary.

MARY. We saw an empty canoe—we thought—that you were drowned.

GEORGE. So I am, Mary—to all but you.

MARY [*Sharply—pulling away from him*]. What do you mean?

GEORGE. Just that—from tonight folks around here will speak of George Fryer who was drowned at the lower end of the lake and whose body must have been sucked down into the Devil's Gorge—since it was never found.

MARY. George, you *can't*—you can't do *that*!

GEORGE. Don't talk so loudly—come down where we won't be seen.

[*He goes down to the foot of the rock and she follows. It is full moonlight now and the cold light makes their faces stand out whitely as they face each other.*

MARY. George—you can't think of such a thing—we'll leave here as we've planned—only when the time comes that we can afford to.

GEORGE. Meaning *never*! Oh Mary—it's been through no fault of ours—God knows we've slaved—deserved better luck.

MARY. But *this* way, George—you can't be a quitter—you've *never* been a quitter.

GEORGE. Oh I couldn't have *planned* it—can't you see, Mary—one moment I was resigned enough, my whole mind set on getting that silly greenhorn safely through the day—the next I was fighting in the water—the terrible under-current, Mary, and that wind—barely a chance in a hundred! I wasn't thinking, Mary—the idea simply came to me—in a burning flash—and then—somehow—I won through—I'll never know how, but at last I did make the shore.

MARY. George—George—I knew something terrible had happened—all afternoon I had the feeling—I suppose it was Peters' fault.

GEORGE. Yes— he got excited—stood right up though I had warned and warned him. First he insisted on going down the lake though I warned him about that too—poor fool—well—he's paid for his foolishness—battered to bits in the Devil's Gorge—where folks will think I am.

MARY [*Excitedly*]. No, George—at least he's not down the rapids. Harry and I saw them drag a body out of the water—he must have managed to hang on to the canoe.

GEORGE [*Wiping his forehead*]. Gosh—I'm glad of that —I *yelled* at him to grab the canoe—the wind drove it too far for me to reach. By the time I came to enough to look around, there was nothing in sight.

MARY. We'll soon know if he's alive—Harry will be back in a minute.

GEORGE. Sure he's alive—else he couldn't have hung on. [*Suddenly excited*] Oh Mary—*now* I can go with a clear conscience.

MARY [*Amazed*]. But our debts—the money we owe at the store! You can't walk out and leave them.

GEORGE [*Nervously patient*]. Why—it's on account of them I have to go this way—to get where there is money to make.

MARY. George, dear.———and how—what do you think you will do?

GEORGE [*Eager to explain*]. I'll leave here tonight and make for across the line—I thought it out all the way back through the bush—you can get me my clothes and what money there is, when the others are out of the way. Oh, it'll work out all right—I've gone over every detail. You know what we've been planning lately if we could ever pull out of here—well, I haven't forgotten my trade and there's good money for skilled workers in any city. What do I care now if the work *is* cramped and indoors —haven't I had enough of the God-forsaken open-spaces!

MARY. But George—going off like this—you'll have to change your name.

GEORGE [*Bitterly*]. Much luck this one has brought me.

MARY [*Putting out her hands*]. We *have* been happy, George.

GEORGE [*Grasping her hands tensely*]. And by Heaven we have a right to be again. We have a right to more than this bare existence, Mary—you who have never complained—who could have married so much better—Life is so cruel—so short—I can't bear to think of us dying here—I can't bear to keep on growing old like this—drying up with the wind and the sun and the long, long cold—I can't bear to see you—without the things that women love—worn before your time. [*Pleading*] You don't think that I am doing wrong, Mary? You see that this is the only way?

MARY [*Gently*]. I—don't think—you are doing wrong.

GEORGE [*Eagerly*]. It is so simple this way—no one will question my death—you can carry on till I make some money—no one will be surprised at you letting the farm go—after all, the little that *is* in it is ours. We can make it seem that some distant relative has left you an unexpected legacy—then you can settle up and you and the boy can come to me. We'll never be wealthy but we can have a few comforts—make a few real friends of our own sort—see some good shows—you can have decent clothes—silks 'n' pretty hats—Harry can go to school—maybe to College if he wants to—have a better chance than we've had.

MARY [*Smiling gently puts her cheek against his*]. Sounds so nice—so lovely—like a Fairy tale—George—too good to come true.

GEORGE. But it will come true, Mary—it's going to come true.

HARRY [*Off stage*]. Ma!

MARY. There's Harry—find a sheltered place down the shore—rest if you can—I'll bring you some food as soon as I can manage.

[GEORGE *disappears to the right as* HARRY *comes in left.*

HARRY. Ma—I couldn't see you.

MARY. It's not so windy down here.

HARRY. Ma—listen—you mustn't feel too badly.

MARY. What is it?

HARRY. That was the Yankee—dad—well—dad wasn't there.

MARY. Oh Harry!

HARRY. They're going to look for him—but ma—they don't think there's a chance—this wind you know—and the rapids. Don't ma—don't—don't feel so badly. Dad—well, you know, ma—it was hard for him here—being brought up in London and all—he always—well, ma, he always kinda *wanted* to get away—mebbe he's happier, you know. He wouldn't want you to feel so bad. It'll be lonesome, but you 'n' me—well, we can get on—somehow. Everyone round here's so kind—they're such friendly people, ma, and they do like us. It'll be easier for me than it was for Dad—you see I kinda *belong*—if ever we went away I'd just have to get back again sometimes—to smell the woods and feel the winds—I can't explain it—but you know. When I get guiding and make heaps of money I'll take you down to the city to visit—but we'll always come home here.

MARY. There, Harry—you're a good boy. Tell me—what are they doing—are they at the house?

HARRY. Yes—the Yankee fellow was all done out—couldn't stand or speak—it's a wonder he was able to

hang on so long—it must have been hours. I had them take him right to the house and then I came for you.

MARY. Oh, son—I can't face them all—not just yet.

HARRY. But, ma, you mustn't stay out here—it's cold and you haven't even had your supper.

MARY. Just for a little while—till I get—a bit settled. You show them where everything is—extra blankets—

HARRY. Oh, I can look after things like that, ma—soon's they can get the fellow round to telling what happened and where—they're going to start searching—and I'm going with them—ma.

MARY. Of course, Harry—you're the man of the house now.

HARRY. Gee, ma—I hate to leave you out here.

MARY. Oh—go, dear—go—I must be alone—to think.

[HARRY *goes away reluctantly* (*left*). *As soon as he is out of earshot,* MARY *turns to where* GEORGE *disappeared. She calls softly and listens.*

MARY. George—George—

[*After a moment there is a cautious answering hail.*

GEORGE. Hello, Mary—what is it?

[GEORGE *appears right.*

MARY. George, I can't do it—ever.

GEORGE. What do you mean?

MARY. It's Harry—I wasn't really thinking of him—he and I can never follow you—this way.

GEORGE. But Mary—I thought you understood—it was for his sake as much as ours that I've wanted to get away. He can't live his life out in the backwoods—never see anything of the world. If he comes out with us he'll

get his chance—get a decent education—have a little fun.

MARY. Yes—yes—Oh, I've wanted all that for him but—it can't be done—this way.

GEORGE. You think I'm doing wrong—what is there will harm anyone?

MARY. Not that, George—I think its right for you—the way you feel—there's no harm done—but we would always be fugitives, in a way—never dare be seen by anyone whom we had ever known—never again use our real name—never speak of our life back here.

GEORGE. But I thought you didn't mind about all that.

MARY. Not for myself—while I was with you—but we can't take Harry into it.

GEORGE. Why, the boy has nothing to lose.

MARY. Just his whole life up to now, George—all his childhood—all his friends—even his name.

GEORGE. Little enough.

MARY. But his all. George—he loves the lakes and the winds like you long for the sights and sounds of city streets—he is as happy with his gun or his paddle as you at a musical comedy—as handy in a canoe or caring for the horses as you at the trade you were 'prenticed to. He has his friends here—everyone likes him. If he went this way he could never speak of them or come back again.

GEORGE. Surely, you don't want him to stay in the backwoods always.

MARY. And I don't expect him to—you know he has his ambitions, George—how he loves the aeroplanes and plans to be a great flyer—the teacher is making inquiries for him. The world is his, George, in a way it was never

ours—a new world where distances mean nothing. But this is his home base—we can't destroy it for him.

GEORGE [*Dispiritedly*]. You mean that I must—stay.

MARY. No—no—George—don't you see—your home base was smashed for you by the war—nothing was the same again—your poor, seared lungs—no employment in London—a wife and child to support. You are a clever man, George, and you could have been a happy and successful one; but—you've never forgiven Life for tearing you up by the roots—why should you—certainly you have a right to grasp this chance.

GEORGE. Then you won't come when I send for you?

MARY. He needs me most for a long time, George—he can't work things out alone—he must study and work—earn money and save it if he is ever to realize his dreams. It will be years—ten—fifteen—the way things look now—but—when that's over—when he doesn't need me any more—we might—who knows—

GEORGE. I might better have drowned properly while I was at it.

MARY. Don't, George—you will be happy I know—stimulated by being with people—crowds of people—laughing—pushing—fighting. It was the soil you grew up in—you'll learn to care for life again.

GEORGE. What's the use—alone?

MARY. Tut—it's freedom you're dying for—you won't be lonesome—not for years yet—then maybe—if we're both still alive—

GEORGE. You will come—sometime.

MARY. Certainly—I'll always be the same—else I couldn't let you go—like this—we've been through too

much together, George—I couldn't let you go at all if I didn't believe you could be happier.

GEORGE. Mary—playing dead does help one to come to life—I'd almost forgotten—how lucky I've been—to —to have you.

MARY. Don't worry about that, George—you're just like other men—Women understand—or try to.

GEORGE. I can't bear to leave you fighting on—alone.

MARY. You mustn't mind, dear—I don't—really. You know I've always had a queer feeling that we—you'n I, George—are going on in Harry—that, somehow, he is our bit of immortality—silly, maybe—but it comforts me so's I've not minded so much our losing out in little ways ourselves.

GEORGE. Mary—Mary—how you put things—

MARY. Listen.

GEORGE. Someone's coming—with a lantern.

MARY. It's from the house—they'll have a search party out on the lake soon—I can pack a few things and you can get well away while they are looking for your body. Hide till they pass.

[GEORGE *disappears to right.* HARRY, KEN *and* HENDERSON *come along the path from the left.* HARRY *and* KEN *are carrying lanterns.*

HARRY [*Anxiously*]. Are you all right, ma?

MARY [*Stepping out into the lantern light*]. Yes, dear.

HENDERSON. This is too terrible, Mrs. Fryer. We're sorry—awfully sorry.

KEN. Gee, yes.

HENDERSON. But Mrs. Fryer—you must think of yourself—not stay out in the cold like this. Harry says you haven't even had any supper. The poor fellow at the

house is sleeping now so I just stepped down to take you back.

KEN. Say—that Yankee came too enough to tell us how it happened—it wasn't George's fault no how.

HARRY. No it wasn't dad's fault at all, ma—the fellow got excited and tried to stand up.

KEN. Any boob that tries jumping 'round in a canoe deserves to be drowned—but it's tough luck, I say, when it's the other guy as gets done in.

HENDERSON. Please, Mrs. Fryer—do come now—you look exhausted.

KEN. Yes—you jest run along, Mrs. Fryer—give Mr. Henderson your lantern, Harry—you can get another at our place to come back. Harry's jest runnin' over ter get my missus ter stay with you, Mrs. Fryer, an' I'm goin' right on in ter the post office ter scare up some men an' boats 'n' sech.

MARY. Thank you—thank you both—you are—very kind.

[HENDERSON *takes her arm awkwardly but kindly and begins to propel her away—to the left. The others turn and start along to the right.*

HARRY. Good-bye, ma.

MARY. Hurry home—dear.

KEN [*Listening*]. What's that?

HENDERSON [*Pausing*]. I don't hear anything.

HARRY. Someone's coming along the path.

GEORGE [*Hails from off stage*]. Hello.

KEN [*Waving his lantern*]. Hello—who is it?

GEORGE. Just me—George Fryer.

KEN [*Almost letting his lantern fall*]. Jest *who*?

[MRS. FRYER *and* HENDERSON *have paused and are looking back as* GEORGE *appears and is picked out by* KEN'S *lantern.* MARY *springs forward and, throwing herself upon him, clasps her arms about his neck.* HARRY *springs forward at the same moment.* GEORGE *clasps one arm about his wife and the other reaches out to grasp the hand of his son.*

MARY. George—George—George—

HARRY. Dad—Oh, Dad—gee!

[*He wrings his father's hand—is unspeakably glad to see him.*

KEN. Bless my soul—so ye wern't drownded efter all!

HARRY [*Bursting with admiration*]. Gosh, Dad—but you *can* swim!

GEORGE [*A little sadly*]. It was just a fight, son—for life—I suppose life *is* worth fighting for—even with the winds and the currents all wrong.

CURTAIN

NOTES ON THE PRODUCTION OF THE PLAYS

In presenting plays with exterior settings, the producer should have a sky-cloth or plaster cyclorama at the back of the stage to diffuse the light and suggest distance, and a flexible system of light units that can be focused or flooded on the cyclorama and stage pieces to give the desired effect. The cyclorama, whether cloth or plaster, is usually painted a flat colour, such as a neutral grey or greyish blue, that will take every light. Of the two types of cyclorama, the plaster is more satisfactory. If the stage has a plain rear wall this should be cleared of ornaments and fixtures and painted the suggested colour. If the paster wall is not possible, a sky-cloth of canvas must be used. This should not sway or show wrinkles. Consequently it should be fastened to a frame or weighted along the lower edge. The best types of cyclorama are of plaster and curved in either a semi-cylindrical or dome shape. An illusion of distance is secured in this way and in the case of the dome cyclorama, an effect of spaciousness as well.

Trees and rocks can be made of canvas stretched on wooden frames, or cut out of thin wood or beaver board, and painted. If it is necessary to walk or stand on the rocks, steps and tables can be placed behind the cut pieces. Of course, it is much better to make the rocks solidly, especially if they are used in the fore part of the stage. This is more expensive; it involves building skeleton structures of wood, packing them with some material such as excelsior, to secure the desired shape, and then covering them with canvas, and painting.

In the first production of the plays, as will be seen from the illustrations, a third method was employed. The rocks were built solidly, but according to a more

severe or stylistic pattern, and were painted in a silver grey that made them unusually receptive to light.

The question of lighting is a difficult one. The producer should refer to one of the texts listed below, or to a manual on stage lighting. Elementary information, and definite suggestions for effective equipment, will be found in a pamphlet entitled, "Planning, Lighting and Equipping School Stages", prepared by H. A. Voaden and E. H. Thomas, which may be obtained from C. G. Mikel, 204 Kingswood Road, Toronto, Secretary of the Manual Arts and Art Section, Ontario Educational Association. This pamphlet and the books on production named give lists of useful references.

Books on Production

The Art of Play Production, by John Dolman Jr., New York, 1928, Harpers.....$4.00

Dramatics for School and Community, by C. M. Wise, Cincinnati, Stewart Kidd, 1923 .....$3.00

The Book of Play Production, by Milton Smith, New York, 1926, Appleton.....$3.00

THE MOTHER LODE

The following note by the author concerning the dress of prospectors will be of value to the director:

"There is no uniform dress for prospectors in the North country. Some dress like lumberjacks, some would be mistaken for down-and-outers, while others adhere to the serviceable khaki. In the bush, high shoe-packs or boots, puttees or leggings are worn.

"Short jackets or windbreakers are favored over the khaki or blue shirt, which is usually open at the neck, while for headwear wool, leather, and fur caps, and even the knitted toque of the French-Canadian lumberjack are seen.

"Every prospector has his knap-sack in which he carries food, tools, change of socks, blanket, and ground sheet. He has a pocket compass

always handy—sometimes fastened to his shirt button. If he believes a heavy snowfall is due, his snowshoes will dangle from his knap-sack.

"The prospector may be rough in appearance, but he is not necessarily uncultured or lacking in education. Many have taken courses in geology and mining engineering. Consequently, in *The Mother Lode* I have made no effort to draw a picture of uncouthness."

WINDS OF LIFE

For a very simple presentation, the author suggests the use of three screens, with outlines cut out to resemble the description given in the play—a group of rocks at the right front corner, the look-out rock, and the long rock in the rear with the tree clinging to it. Behind the look-out screen she suggests that a firm, good-sized table be placed with steps leading up to it from the right. The screen in the rear can be kept firm by having one end set against the other side of the table.

GLOSSARY OF WORDS USED IN THE MOTHER LODE

STRIKE. . .locating a rich ore deposit.

PROSPECT. . .a promising claim, or section of land which the prospector stakes out for development.

GRAB SAMPLES. . .pieces of rock or ore picked at random from any outcropping (of rock). They differ from channel samples which are procured at regular intervals along the strike, and indicate more closely the actual value of the ore.

ASSAY. . .laboratory test of ore giving value per ton in mineral content.

GRUBSTAKE. . .a loan or gift of money to the prospector usually giving the donor an interest in any claims staked.

DISCOVERY POST...or Number One post . . . The first stake driven into the ground, presumed to be where the discovery of ore has been made.

LINES...From the discovery post the prospector blazes a line to the remaining corners of the claim.

WILDCATTING...staking claims and selling without regard to value.

CHALCOPYRITE...geological term, pronounced Kal-Ko-pie-right. The presence of Chalcopyrite suggests copper ore.

OVERBURDEN...earth, dead leaves, and foreign substance, covering rock.

BUSH CRAZY...a term used to describe a man who develops nervous or abnormal tendencies because of living alone in the bush. Sometimes called "bushed".

LOCATION...claims staked near a discovery without regard to mineral value. Claims staked for location have a potential value, as mining companies invariably buy up large areas surrounding the immediate scene of activity for future development.

FREE GOLD...known sometimes as 'High-grade'; gold which is visible to the eye—usually embedded in quartz.

MUSKEG...swampy ground.

GREENSTONE AND
QUARTZ PORPHYRY...a favorable geological formation for gold.

MOTHER LODE...presumed to be the main gold-bearing vein which is linked with off-shoots. It is more or less hypothetical to prospectors but is eagerly sought for.

QUARTZ...a hard, white, crystal form of rock.

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